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MA thesis

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**Exploring the Influence of Small Member States
on EU External Policies: The Influence of the
Latvian and Lithuanian Council Presidencies
on the Eastern Partnership Initiative**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to challenge the assumption that small member state influence on the European Union's (EU) common foreign policy has been negligible. Its purpose is to study the influence of two small member states, Latvia and Lithuania, have had on the Eastern Partnership initiative during their respective Presidency of the Council of the EU periods. A third case, Poland's Presidency, will also be examined and compared with the other two cases. This will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the impact the other two small member states have had in the development of the EaP compared to a bigger member state. Overall, this thesis adds to the existing discussion of small member state influence in three ways: first, it provides an overview of classical and contemporary small member state literature and critically assesses the realist interpretation of small state behavior in the international system; second, it reviews the different methodologies used by various authors and synthesizes a new influence measuring framework; and third, it applies the analytical framework to the selected cases and tests three sets of hypothesis.

I argue that three factors can most adequately explain small member state influence: first, small member states must be committed to an issue - it must be of general importance to them; second, they must possess immaterial resources, such as general expertise or they be recognized as leaders in the issue area; and third, small member states are more influential when they use the EU's institutional setting (such as the Council Presidency seat) to their advantage. The actual extent of influence is measured using three indicators: goal achievement, the ascription of agenda setting, and the ascription of final outcomes. This exercise revealed three conclusions: first, that small states have more influence on the multilateral Eastern Partnership platforms than on bilateral relationships; second, that small member states have more influence on the final outcomes than on the agendas; and third, that the overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is higher. Based on the results this thesis produced, I conclude that small member states are able to exert a limited amount of influence on the EU's foreign policy when they use their strengths and resources to leverage their positions vis-à-vis bigger and more powerful member states, but without the support of other actors, the probability of failing to deliver results would be higher.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis sets out to challenge the assumption that small member state influence on the European Union's (EU) common foreign policy has been negligible. Its purpose is to study the influence of two small member states, Latvia and Lithuania, have had on the Eastern Partnership initiative. Although some previous studies on the topic of small member state role on EU foreign policy exist, many authors "continue to disregard small states"¹, stating that the "available case studies in International Relations (IR) heavily concentrate on great powers, and thus look only at one particular sample of states"² with some authors suggesting that "bigger EU member states exert much more influence than small ones" and that "small states are not left much choice other than to follow the "rules of the game" of large states"³.

We can distinguish between two types of small state literature: one focusing on the systemic level and the other on the state level of analysis. The earliest works dealt with the system level of analysis and "were foremost preoccupied by the question of the survival of small states among the big powers"⁴, whereas the works focusing on the system level of analysis referred to the "general environment which is impossible or very difficult for a small state to change, the state level of analysis relates to more direct causes of small state behavior"⁵. While scholarly work focusing on the systemic level of analysis tried to explain small state behavior in a more abstract terms, "the progressive development of the EU has made several scholars turn their attention to the position of small states in Europe", and has "resulted in a proliferation of studies which have almost exclusively focused on the strategies of small states"⁶.

This thesis aims to provide new understanding about the role small member states play in EU's common foreign policy and to examine if, to what extent and in what manner small member states have influenced one of the largest EU foreign policy initiatives – the Eastern Partnership (EaP). Although "new" small member states are faced with several disadvantages due to their

¹ Nasra, Skander. 2010. „Weak Power, Great Influence: Small States in EU Foreign Policy. The Case of Belgium and Greece“. Presented at the Coherence, Consensus and Conflict in EU External Affairs Conference, Brussels

² Neumann, B. Iver., Gstöhl, S. 2004. "Lilliputians in Gulliver's World? Small States in International Relations" *Institute of International Affairs – University of Iceland Working Paper*: 2.

³ Pastore, Gunta. 2013. "Small New Member States in the EU Foreign Policy: Towards Small State Smart Strategy?" *Baltic Journal of Political Science* 2: 68.

⁴ Skander, Nasra. 2010: 2.

⁵ Lindell, Ulf., Persson, Stefan. 1986. "The Paradox of Weak State Power: A Research and Literature Overview." *Conflict and Cooperation* 21: 80.

⁶ Skander, Nasra. 2010: 2.

lower share of bargaining and voting powers and lower financial and administrative capacities⁷, I argue that small member states, with varying success, can still influence EU foreign policy in all phases of the policy-making process from agenda-setting to policy design and policy implementation.

Overall, this thesis adds to the existing discussion of small member state influence in three ways: first, it provides an overview of classical and contemporary small member state literature and critically assesses the realist interpretation of small state behavior in the international system; second, it reviews the different methodologies used by various authors and synthesizes a new influence measuring framework; and third, it applies the analytical framework to the selected three cases. The analytical framework will be applied to a comparative study of two small member states and their respective Presidency of the Council of the EU periods – Latvia and Lithuania, which ran from January to June 2015 and July to December 2013. This will allow me to contextualize the Council Presidencies in a theoretical framework and to test whether it holds up against the research problem of this thesis. A third case, Poland's Presidency (July to December 2011), will also be examined and compared with the other two cases. This will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the impact the other two small member states had in the development of the EaP compared to a bigger member state.

The Eastern Partnership initiative, which is part of the European Neighborhood Policy and launched in Prague on 7 May 2009, seeks to “deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union and its six Eastern neighbors: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine”⁸. More specifically, the “EaP was devised to pursue a novel two-track approach of bi- and multilateral relations with EU's eastern neighbors – through new contractual agreements, joint policy platforms, flagship initiatives and a variety of supportive technical and financial instruments – to ensure the partner countries closer approximation towards the EU”⁹. I chose it as an overarching case because it was a priority policy area for all three countries during their time as the Council president. Accordingly, “small states tend to be proactive in EU negotiations where they do have important economic and political interests at

⁷ Panke, Diana. 2008. „The Influence of Small States in the EU: Structural Disadvantages and Counterstrategies“. *UCD Dublin European Institute Working Papers* 3: 24.

⁸ The European Commission. “Eastern Partnership”. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/eastern-partnership/index_en.htm

⁹ Korosteleva, Elena., Natorski, Michal., Simao, Licinia. 2013. “The Eastern Dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy: Practices, Instruments and Social Structures.” *East European Politics* 29: 257-258.

stake, while being reactive in sectors of limited interest to them¹⁰". For Latvia, "ever since launching of the Eastern Partnership initiative, it has been a priority in Latvia's foreign policy and included it among its priorities for the Presidency of the Council of the EU"¹¹. For Lithuania, the Eastern Partnership "has been a priority from the very beginning of initiation of the project"¹² and for Poland the Warsaw Eastern Partnership Summit in December 2011 was one of the central events of their Council presidency¹³. The Council Presidency itself is an important vehicle that is be used by member states to exert influence on common EU policy. But despite the post-Lisbon Treaty limitations on the Council presidency, which saw the foreign policy agenda-setting competencies granted to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, member states can still realize their influence on the common foreign policy¹⁴. But important questions remain: compared to big states, can small member states influence EU foreign policy? If so, how much influence can they exert? How can we explain their influence? These are the main research questions this thesis attempts to answer.

This thesis has three main sections. The first section provides a review of the general small state literature and the different small state conceptualizations. It aims to give an overview of the early debates on small state role and influence in the international system with a focus on both the system and the state level of analysis in general IR and EU studies literature. It then provides a summary of the contemporary debate while generating the theoretical framework used in this thesis. Starting from a discussion of the theoretical principles that different scholars have used in order to explain small member state influence, I highlight commitment, immaterial resources and the utilization of EU policy initiatives as the factors that can best explain the influence of small member states on the EU's foreign policy.

The second chapter provides the research design and talks about the pros and cons of a small-N methodology. Namely, the main benefit of a small-N design is that the "case-oriented" (rather than "variable-oriented") nature of the research design allows to analyze the "unfolding of

¹⁰ Thorhallsson, Baldur., Wivel, Anders. 2006. "Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?" In *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19: 659.

¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. 2015. "The Eastern Partnership – a Component of the European Neighborhood Policy". <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/eastern-partnership>

¹² Ghazaryan, Anna. 2013. "Eastern Partnership was priority from the very beginning – Interview of Lithuanian Ambassador in Armenia." <http://www.urm.lt/am/en/news/eastern-partnership-was-priority-from-the-very-beginninginterview-of-lithuanian-ambassador-in-armenia>

¹³ Kaczynski, Piotr Maciej. 2011. *Polish Council Presidency 2011: Ambitions and Limitations*. Stockholm: Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies: 38.

¹⁴ Kaznowski, Adam. 2014. „Defying the Treaty: The Influence of the Polish and Lithuanian Council Presidencies on the Development of the Eastern Partnership“. *EU Diplomacy Paper* 6.

events and variations in political developments within each country rather than the variation in macro-variables between countries”¹⁵. Although no political development on the EU scale ever happens in a vacuum, a macro-variable study is not what this thesis seeks to accomplish. Still, when the goal is to explain the extent of influence small member countries have on a certain policy outcome, one needs to provide a set of variables that have had an impact on the end result. The outcome this thesis seeks to explain is *influence*. Some authors, like Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006), have identified three clusters of variables - realist, liberalist and constructivist, each utilizing the general insights of IR theory¹⁶. Other authors have looked at both systemic level (structure of the policy area, state of the policy area, norms) and at state level (commitment, network capital, immaterial resources, deliberation) variables¹⁷. In the second chapter, I provide an overview of the different methodologies authors have utilized in the past. The goal is to synthesize a new novel way to measure small state influence.

The third and last chapter applies the analytical and methodological framework developed in the last two chapters to the three selected cases – the Council Presidencies of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In the first part of the chapter, I provide a synopsis of the history of the European Neighborhood Policy, development of the Eastern Partnership initiative and the EU Council Presidency institution. I also look at the use of the Council Presidency as a tool to exert influence, the commitment to the Eastern Partnership initiative and the immaterial resources of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The final part of the chapter is devoted to individual case analysis and comparison. The thesis ends with a general conclusion and a discussion on the delivered results.

¹⁵ Landman, Todd. 2008. *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge: 69.

¹⁶ Thorhallsson, Baldur., Wivel, Anders. 2006: 656.

¹⁷ Nasra, Skander. 2010: 4.

1. EXPLAINING SMALL STATE BEHAVIOUR

I begin this chapter by asking a simple question: what is a small state? In other words – how can we conceptualize small states? The answer may seem obvious, but scholars are divided on the subject. After discussing the different definitions, I present a conceptualization that I will use throughout this thesis. In short, I look at both objective (such as population size and gross domestic product) and subjective (the state's own perception of its smallness) variables. The next two subchapter will discuss small state literature in general IR. After presenting an overview of the debates that have shaped the general discourse, I will examine the contemporary small state literature in EU studies. The final part of the first chapter will concentrate on synthesizing a theoretical approach which can adequately explain small state influence on EU foreign policy.

1. 1 Conceptualizing small states

Conceptualization is an important first step in any social scientific endeavor and constructing a working definition of small states is critical in order to examine small member state influence on the EU's foreign policy. This is made difficult by the different range of definitions used by scholars when they talk about small states. There is “no one overarching definition¹⁸” and the concept is “contested in the theory and practice of international and European affairs¹⁹”. Generally, we can distinguish between two types of definitions, each taking into consideration different types of criteria. There are the conceptualizations that define small states using objective factors (quantifiable data) and there are authors who define small states using subjective criteria, looking at how states themselves define their size. Then there are authors who combine both factors and include both material and subjective criteria in their definition. An overview of the various methods used to measure state size is summarized in table 1.

Scholars who employ objective factors usually identify four variables used to define the size of states: population size, land area and total income (measured as cross domestic product – GDP) and military capacity²⁰. Defining the size of states using these four variables “has its roots in nineteenth century Europe when the success of states was primarily seen in terms of their defense capacity and territorial foreign expansion, military capacity being a necessary

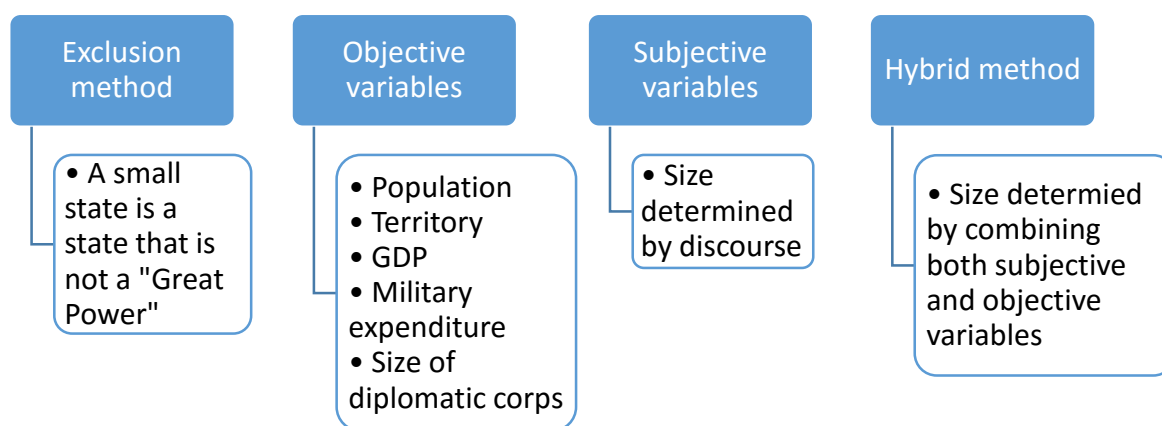
¹⁸ Archer, Clive., Nugent, Neill. 2002. “Introduction: Small States and the European Union”. *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* 11: 2.

¹⁹ Thorhallsson, Baldur., Wivel, Anders. 2006: 652.

²⁰ Thorhallsson, Baldur. 2006. „The Size of States in the European Union: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives“. *European Integration* 28: 7.

feature²¹". Historically, population size "has frequently been used to measure country size, with the definition of "small" being based essentially on arbitrary cut-off levels²²". Over time, these cut-off levels have varied greatly between authors. For example, Kuznets (1958) defines small states as those states that have a population of 10 million or smaller, while Gylfason (1999) categorized states as "small" when their population is 2 million or less²³. But using population as the only factor to assess state size poses a problem. Any cut off point, be it 10 or 2 million, is inherently arbitrary. For example, should we categorize a country with a population of 2.1 million as "big" or "small"? A dichotomous classification system may have worked during the "European concert in the 19th century or superpower rivalry during the Cold War when the great powers could easily be distinguished from the rest²⁴", but not today. A need to compliment "big" and "small" with additional categories was apparent.

Table 1. Methods and variables used to measure the size of states.



Source: Summarized by author.

Adding land area, GDP and military expenditure to the mix may give us a more nuanced definition. Crowards (2002) uses three of these variables (population, land area and GDP) to categorize 190 states and on this basis classified 79 countries as "small" with "medium-small" and "medium-large" serving as the "middle" categories²⁵. Other authors have also added

²¹ *Ibid*: 8.

²² Crowards, Tom. 2002. "Defining the Category of "Small" States". In *Journal of International Development* 14: 144.

²³ Kuznets, Simon. 1958. „Economic growth in small nations“. *Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations*, eds. Austin Robinson. London: Macmillan Co.

Gylfason, Thorvaldur. 1999. „Exports, Inflation and Growth“. *International Monetary Fund Working Papers* 27: 9.

²⁴ Thorhallsson, Baldur., Wivel, Anders. 2006: 653.

²⁵ Crowards, Tom. 2002.

“micro” to the mix (states such as Monaco, Liechtenstein and Vatican City)²⁶ with the literature “congealing around issues of sovereignty and action capacity – on how dependence on other polities in formulating and conducting policy impinges on that policy²⁷”. But using a population/land area mix is fraught with its own complications. Should we classify Mongolia, the 19th biggest country in terms of land area and a population of 3 million people, as a small, medium or a big country compared to, for example, the Netherlands - a country with a population of almost 17 million people, but with a total area that positions it as the 134th “biggest” country in the world. Other traditional variables such as GDP and military expenditure have also been utilized and combined with population and territory figures in order to define state size, but as Thorhallsson (2006) argues, this exercise has had limited success “because these four variables may well have been suited to describing the size of states in the old international system where military capacity was the key to the survival of states; manpower for military purpose was highly important; the size of the economy was a basis for building up the militia; and states attached importance to concrete territorial gains²⁸”. In the end, “a judgmental element must creep into the exercise of categorizing states by size²⁹”.

Trying to overcome the fact that defining “smallness” objectively is fraught with difficulties, some authors have instead argued that size is actually a social construction³⁰. Social constructivism (or just constructivism) raises the meta-theoretical issue: “whether things are given and correctly perceived by our senses (empiricism), or whether the things we perceive are rather the product of our conceptualization (constructivism)³¹”. Using the constructivist way to define state size entails analyzing discourse in order to determine how states themselves perceive their size in the international community and *vice versa*. Robert Rothstein defines the status of “small powers” using this factor, arguing that “the Small power is not defined by specific qualities which it possesses (or lacks) but rather by a position it occupies in its own and other’s eyes³²”.

²⁶ Archer, Clive., Nugent, Neill. 2002: 3.

²⁷ Neumann, B. Iver., Gstöhl, S. 2004: 6.

²⁸ Thorhallsson, Baldur. 2006: 12-13.

²⁹ Archer, Clive., Neil, Nugent. 2002. “Introduction: Small States and the European Union”. *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* 11: 5.

³⁰ Panke, Diana. 2008: 3.

Hanf, Kenneth., Soetendorp, Ben, eds. 1998. *Adapting to European Integration: Small States and the European Union*. New York: Routledge.

³¹ Kratochwil, Friedrich. 2009. „Constructivism: what it is (not) and how it matters“. *Approaches and Methodologies in Social Sciences*, eds. Michael Keating., Donatella Della Porta. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 81.

³² Rothstein, L. Robert. 1968. *Alliances and Small Powers*. New York: Columbia University Press: 27.

Alternatively, author such as Raimo Väyrynen, Cliver Archer and Neill Nugent have combined material (such as size of diplomatic corps and GDP) with subjective factors. Although set down 44 year ago, Väyrynen (1971) and his summary of the different ways small states have been measured (see table 2) still resonates today. In his analysis, he identifies two axes: objective/subjective and endogenous/exogenous. The first is the “*objective* and *subjective* measure of rank with the former meaning the measurement of rank by some “hard” aggregate variables” and the second is the *endogenous/exogenous* rank with “the former measuring the internal properties of the actor, while exogenous ranks are determined by means of judgement and perceptions of external actors³³”.

Table 2. Types of rank analysis used by Väyrynen (1971).

	Endogenous rank	Exogenous rank
Objective rank	Rank measured by aggregate variables, like area, population, GDP, military budget, value of industrial production, etc.	Rank measured by the amount or value of interaction received from a given set of actors.
Subjective rank	Politicians or general public’s view of its own state’s size and capability.	External actors (foreign governments) view of a state’s size and capability.

Source: Raimo, Väyrynen. 1971, 93.

To conclude this section, we now turn to the working definition used in this thesis.

1.2 Conceptualizing small member states in the EU

As it turned out, defining what constitutes a small state in the international system is not always as clear cut as it may appear. Turning now to the working conceptualization used in this thesis, I ask: how can we define what constitutes a small state in the EU? The easiest way to go about this exercise is to define small member states using the number of votes in the Council or the amount of members of parliament (MP’s) in the European Parliament (EP). Seats in the EP are allocated on the basis of only one variable: the population of each member state³⁴. As this thesis takes a closer look at only three cases (Latvia, Lithuania and Poland), it would be redundant to

³³ Raimo, Väyrynen. 1971. “On the definition and measurement of small power status”. In *Cooperation and Conflict* 6: 92.

³⁴ The European Parliament. “MEP’s”. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/about-meps.html>

conduct a thorough case study of all the 28 EU member states using both objective and subjective variables. I'm using two size categories, "small" and "big", and excluding "micro" and "medium" as the aim of this thesis is to compare two small (Latvia and Lithuania) with one big (Poland) state. So in order not to overcomplicate things, I'll use only one variable to determine the relationship between these three cases – allocated seats in the EP. In short, this thesis defines small states as states which possess less than the EU-28 average of MEP's in the Parliament (751 total MEP's divided by 28 member states equals 26.8 MEP's). 21 member states fall into this category (marked green on Table 3) with only the Netherlands in between the two categories. Below (table 3) is a classification of all 28 member states based on the number of MEP's in the Parliament. Even without adding a cut-off point we can already see that Poland with its 51 MEP's and Lithuania, Latvia with 11 and 8 MEP's respectively are at the opposite ends of the table.

Table 3. EU member states divided by size and the number of MEP's.

1.	Germany	96	15.	Austria	18
2.	France	74	16.	Bulgaria	17
3.	Italy	73	17.	Denmark	13
4.	UK	73	18.	Finland	13
5.	Spain	54	19.	Slovakia	13
6.	Poland	51	20.	Croatia	11
7.	Romania	32	21.	Ireland	11
8.	Netherlands	26	22.	Lithuania	11
9.	Belgium	21	23.	Latvia	8
10.	Czech Rep.	21	24.	Slovenia	8
11.	Greece	21	25.	Cyprus	6
12.	Hungary	21	26.	Estonia	6
13.	Portugal	21	27.	Luxembourg	6
14.	Sweden	20	28.	Malta	6

Source: The European Parliament. "MEP's". <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/about-meps.html>

1.3 Small state theory in International Relations

The proliferation of small states after the end of the Cold War has not matched the analytical focus they deserve. Indeed, Neumann and Gstöhl (2006) argue that the "extant scholarship in the IR discipline has focused almost exclusively on great powers, while small states have been

a residual category” and that the “lack of an agreed concrete definition of small states has also very much marked the body of literature that might be termed small state studies³⁵”. Steinmetz and Wivel (2010) argue that “the study of small states is plagued by a lack of cumulative insights and coherent debate” as “there is no agreement on how we should define small states, what similarities we would expect to find in their foreign policies, or how small states influence international relations³⁶ (see also Antola and Lehtimäki 2001; Knudsen 2002; Archer and Nugent 2002).

There is no common “Small State Theory” and the authors are loosely tied by their conviction that size matters³⁷. The confusion extends to the exact beginning of a truly genuine “school of small state studies”. Some authors mention the aftermath of the Second World War and the emergence of IR as an independent academic institution as the beginning of an integrated corpus of knowledge that is known today as “small state theory”³⁸ while Neumann and Gstöhl (2006) point out that scholars were already “interested in the study of small state throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” and that “larger academic interest in small states returned with a study of the wartime diplomacy of small states by Baker Fox (1959), which marked the beginning of a genuine school of small state studies³⁹”.

This kind of scholarship that included or focused exclusively on explaining small state behavior in the international system proliferated in the 1950 – 1960s. Neumann and Gstöhl (2006) quote Höll (1978) who identifies three reasons for this new interest in small states: “first, the “bias” towards great powers and the U.S., with American research increasingly perceived as making for a deficit of the IR discipline, in particular in the Scandinavian scientific community (Kirt and Waschkuhn (2001) even argue that one can distinguish between two schools of “small state studies”: an American (or Anglo-Saxon) and a European – Scandinavian/German⁴⁰); second, the rapid social changes at the end of the 1960s brought traditional political science approaches

³⁵ Neumann, B. Iver., Gstöhl, S. 2004: 7.

³⁶ Steinmetz, Robert., Wivel, Anders. 2010. *Small States in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities*. Farnham: Ashgate: 4.

³⁷ Hans, Mouritzen., Wivel, Anders, eds. 2005. „Europe and the Nation State“. *The Geopolitics of Euro-Atlantic Integration*. London: Routledge: 9.

³⁸ Griffiths, Richard., Pharo, Helge. 1995. „Small States and European Integration – Literature survey and analysis“. *Arena Working Paper*: 19.

³⁹ Neumann, B. Iver., Gstöhl, S. 2004: 7.

⁴⁰ Romain, Kirt., Waschkuhn, Arno. 2001. *Kleinstaaten-Kontinent Europa: Probleme und Perspektiven*. Baden-Baden: Nomos: 25

into question; and third, increasing international interdependence raised issues of how states with limited capabilities coped with costs of dependence⁴¹”.

This period in the midst of the Cold War is characterized by scholarship that was concerned mainly with state survival and alignment policy with discussion focusing on whether small states can survive on their own in the international system. Some of the more influential work from this period include Rothstein’s book (1968) “*Alliances and Small Powers*”, Keohane’s (1969) article “*Lilliputians Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics*” and Vital’s book (1971) “*The Survival of Small States: Studies in Small Power/Great Power Conflict*”. Their work is mainly concerned with balance of power issues and political, economic and military power imbalances between “Great” and “Small” nations.

The main arguments stem from the realist scholarship and are as follows: 1) the main actors of the international system are states; 2) the state of the international system is anarchic and therefore no single state dominates; 3) “Great Power” interests can override “Small Power” interests because of their limited material base; 4) therefore non-alignment is dangerous for “Small Powers”; 5) *ergo* in search of security, “Small Powers” have more incentive to form, join and work through alliances. Rothstein explains that “Small Powers” ought to prefer mixed, multilateral alliances because “they provide the most benefits in terms of security and political influence” and “if unavailable, [Small Powers] should probably choose a Small Power Alliance in preference to an unequal, bilateral alliance, particularly if the Small Powers do not fear an immediate threat to their security, and if their goals in allying are primarily political⁴²”. The authors are therefore also pessimistic about the extent of “Small Power” influence in the international system. Vital, in his 1980 book *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations*, denies a significant political role for alliances and states that “the coalition or alliance is not an effective unit of foreign policy and strategy at all, except in the narrow, if extremely important, respect that it can from time to time marshal great strength” because a “coalition requires collective leadership and the sinking of national interest as individually defined by each member states” which in turn leads to the domination of bigger coalition members over the smaller ones⁴³. But Vital also argues that acting alone carries its

⁴¹ Otmar, Höll. 1978. “Kritische Anmerkungen zur Kleinstaaten-Theorie”. In *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 7: 260.

⁴² Rothstein, L. Robert. 1968: 177.

⁴³ Vital, David. 1980. *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group: 186.

own dangers and states that choose to act on their own face high costs of independence⁴⁴. Following the logic of this argument, small states are disadvantages when acting alone, but also when joining coalitions that include “bigger powers”. These conclusions are not surprising considering realist suspicions towards the importance of coalitions and alliances in general.

But then again these studies have to be placed in their temporal context. The Cold War was raging and the majority of countries these studies refer to as “Great Powers” were part of the “Third World” or states that were not aligned with either NATO or the Communist Bloc. All in all, this was a time when the relevance of systemic factors were emphasized and a case was being made for the argument that a small state’s ability to act is dependent on the character of the international system in which they exist⁴⁵. This in turn created a whole branch of new research that focused on strategies that can help small states mitigate these structural constraints and increase their influence. According to Lindell and Persson (1986), discussion at that time centered on: first, alignment policy, where the discussion centered on whether non-alignment is more advantageous than joining alliances; second, how small powers can exploit “Great Power” weaknesses to their own advantage; and third, on how small states can choose certain diplomatic tactics in order to increase their influence when negotiating with stronger states⁴⁶. Vogel (1983) also supplies an analytical framework that identifies structurally determined behavior and voluntary strategies of small states that help them mitigate structural constraints on their behavior that includes corporatism and membership in international organizations⁴⁷.

Baehr’s (1975) conclusion about the insufficiency of the “small state” concept as an analytical tool signaled a waning interest in small state studies in the 1980s. He argued that because they “form too broad a category for purposes of analysis” and “if all states, with the possible exception of two [U.S. and the USSR], are “small”, one might as well abandon smallness as a focus of study⁴⁸”. The general size of states started to matter less to scholars. This was also the time when more and more scholars turned their attention to European small states. The popularity of neoliberal institutionalism and the general focus on international regimes and institutions, the decline of U.S. hegemony, the rise of global interdependence, the erosion of

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ Lindell, Ulf., Persson, Stefan. 1986. “The Paradox of Weak State Power: A Research and Literature Overview”. *Cooperation and Conflict* 21: 81.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*: 81-91.

⁴⁷ Hans, Vogel. 1983. „Small States’ Efforts in International Relations: Enlarging the Scope“. *Small States in Europe and Dependence*, eds. Otmar Höll. Vienna: Braumüller: 54-68.

⁴⁸ Baehr, Peter. 1975. “Small States: A Tool for Analysis?” *World Politics* 27: 466.

borders and the liberalization of movement of goods, services, capital and people all contributed to the focus shifting to small states and economic interdependence/development issues⁴⁹.

When the 1980s saw a decline of small state scholarship and the focus turning to economic issues, the 1990s marked the renaissance of small state studies. This was due to the rather sudden (re)emergence of small states in Central and Eastern Europe after the dissolution of the USSR. Changes in IR theory itself and the popularity of social constructivism with its focus on norms and identity also reinvigorated small state studies during that time⁵⁰. This period marks the shift of interest from generalizable hypothesis to a localized focus on regional trends and developments mainly in Europe, but also in other regions (mainly in Africa and Asia). The next chapter will pick up where this one ends and examines small state literature in the broadly defined academic field of “European studies”. To conclude, table 4, derived from Neumann and Gstöhl’s paper *Lilliputians in Gulliver’s World? Small States in International Relations* (2004), summarizes the development of small state studies in IR from the 1950s to the post-Cold War revival.

Table 4. Synopsis of small state studies by Neumann and Gstöhl (2004).

	1950s-1970s: heyday	1980s: standstill	1990s-today: revival
Historical events	Cold War conflict, proliferation of small states through decolonization	Decline of the U.S. hegemon and rise of global interdependence	End of Cold War, globalization and regional integration, proliferation of small states
Dominant IR theory	Realism/neorealism	Neorealism vs. neoliberal institutionalism	Rationalism vs social constructivism
Small state topics	Definition of small states, size and foreign policy, security issues, small and micro-states in international organizations	Small states and economic interdependence, development issues.	Small states in European integration and in globalization processes, ethno-political conflicts

Source: Neumann, B. Iver., Gstöhl, S. 2004: 13.

⁴⁹ Neumann, B. Iver., Gstöhl, S. 2004: 10-12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*: 12.

1.4 Small state literature in EU Studies

The aim of this chapter is to highlight how small states in Europe have been studied. The aim is to present the core themes and not to discuss in length the empirical results of each study. Carlsnaes (2007) suggests that “the modern analysis of the international relations of small European states was established by Annette Baker Fox in her landmark book on *The Power of Small States*, published in 1959, where she inquired into how the governments of small states (such as Sweden, Spain, Turkey, Switzerland, Ireland and Portugal) avoided being drawn into the Second World War, while other similarly small and weak states failed to do so⁵¹. The end of the Cold War and the (re)emergence of several small states in Central and Eastern Europe prompted a revival of small state studies⁵². This scholarship was reinvigorated by scholars asking questions such as: what is a small state in the EU? How can we explain the behavior of small EU member states? How much influence do small states have on EU policy? The focus was also on “identifying the often particular and unconventional sources of small states’ foreign policy power⁵³.”

This renewed interest produced scholarly research that can be classified under the rather broad academic field of “European studies” (also “EU studies” or “European integration studies”, but in order to simplify things, I’m only using “EU studies” as an umbrella term). As noted above, the steady decline of interest in small states and their role in the international system in IR coincided with the rapidly growing interest in small states in Europe. This process was due to several reasons: first, in the 1990s, many small states (re)emerge after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the USSR; second, the rapidly increasing pace of European integration and the 1995 enlargement round which saw Sweden, Finland and Austria join the EU; third, in the 2000s, the 2004 Eastern enlargement with Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus and Malta joining the ranks. We can broadly categorize the different periods into three distinct eras in EU studies – the 1990s revival, the 2000s “golden age” and the 2010s to present. Table 5 sums up the noteworthy historical events and topics that were popular in the given era.

⁵¹ Carlsnaes, Walter. 2007. „How Should we Study the Foreign Policies of Small European States?“ *Outono-Inverno* 118: 8.

⁵² Goetschel, Laurent, eds. 1998. *Small States inside and outside the European Union: Interests and Policies*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 9.

⁵³ Chong, Alan., Maass, Matthias. 2010. “Introduction: the foreign policy power of small states”. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23: 381.

Table 5. Synopsis of small state literature in EU studies.

	1990s: the revival	2000s: the golden age	2010s-present
Noteworthy historical events	Fall of the USSR; 1995 enlargement.	2004 and 2007 “Eastern” enlargement; onset of the global financial crisis	Eurozone crisis; full onset of the Treaty of Lisbon.
Popular small state topics	Processes of integration; rising interdependence; rise of studies examining one specific policy area and small state influence; single country studies.	Europeanization of new member states domestic politics; role and influence of (new) small member states in the EU; security challenges of small EU states	Institutional changes and small states ability to influence.

Source: Compiled by author.

In the 1990s, after the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, scholarship on small states in the EU mostly focused on integration, interdependence and small state influence on certain EU policy areas. For example, Goetschel’s (1998) “*Small States Inside and Outside the European Union*” examines the “relationship between European states both inside and outside the EU” and the “consequence of these developments on the foreign and security policy of small states⁵⁴”. Another influential work from on how small states influence EU politics (Common Agricultural Policy or CAP) was Baldur Thorhallsson’s (2000) “*The Role of Small States in the European Union*”. The book looks at the “role of smaller states, deals with the important criteria of distribution and redistribution of EU budgetary expenditures in the key areas of agriculture and structural funds and explains how smaller states promote their interest more effectively than larger states⁵⁵” .

When the 1990s saw scholarly interest return to small state topics in Europe, the 2000s can be considered a truly “golden age” for small EU state studies. The Eastern enlargement in 2004 and 2007 saw numerous small states join the EU and a shuffling of balance of power inside the EU institutions. This period is characterized not only by scholarship that continued exploring the role and influence the new small member states had in the now expanded EU, but also an impressive body of literature on “Europeanisation” emerged. Archer and Nugent’s (2002)

⁵⁴ Goetschel, Laurent, eds. 1998: 1.

⁵⁵ Thorhallsson, Baldur. 2000. *The Role of Small States in the European Union*. Farmham: Ashgate: 1.

article “*Small States and the European Union*” explores the “distinctive contributions small states have made to the evolution of the European integration process and the nature and operation of the European Union⁵⁶”. Their research is historical in nature and does not yet include the states that joined in 2004.

Scholarship that focused on the new small member states and their role and influence in the EU gained in popularity in the second half of the decade. Panke’s (2008) analysis of small state influence in EU explores the “strategic advantages and disadvantages of smaller states in the EU and comprehensively maps their strategies to counterbalance them⁵⁷”. Overall, her research found that small states can effectively counterbalance “size related disadvantages a great deal (albeit with inter-state variation) and [to an extent] shape EU policies according to their interests⁵⁸”. Avery, Faber and Schmidt’s (2009) study on the effects of the EU on the new member states also belongs in this category. Their study looks at how accession has affected a selected few new small member states. The Nordic countries were also enjoying the spotlight. For example, Jakobsen (2009) has argued that “the Nordic countries have had a significant, and at times even decisive, influence upon the Common Security and Defense Policy⁵⁹”.

It can be argued that EU studies has not been able to produce much generalizable knowledge about small member state behavior in the EU⁶⁰. It is therefore understandable that scholars focused their attention on specific policy areas. This thesis also aims to situate itself in this category of research. It seeks to explain and determine the extent small member states have had on one key EU policy area – the Eastern Partnership initiative. In order to do so, I employ the use of three case studies in order to compare the EU Council presidency periods of Latvia and Lithuania with that of Poland’s. The reason for committing to this kind of research is simple – studies that focus on small member state influence on EU foreign policy have been few and far between. Nasra’s (2008; 2010) research has contributed to this task by looking at Belgium and Greece, but overall scholarship on this topic has been scarce.

One area of research that also gained popularity in the 2000s was studies that focused on the process of “Europeanisation” and norms in general. For example, Annica (2002) looks at how

⁵⁶ Archer, Clive., Nugent, Neill. 2002: 1.

⁵⁷ Panke, Diana. 2008: 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*: 26.

⁵⁹ Jakobsen, Peter Viggo. 2009. “Small States, Big Influence: The Overlooked Nordic Influence on the Civilian EDSP”. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 47: 81.

⁶⁰ Nasra, Skander. 2011. „Governance in EU foreign policy: exploring small state influence“. *Journal of European Public Policy* 18: 165.

small states have influenced the normative environment of the EU and draws from Sweden's participation in the field of environmental politics⁶¹, while Björkdahl (2008) explores norm advocacy as a way to explain small member states influence in the EU by "tracking the process of Swedish promotion of conflict prevention"⁶². The newly emerged body of literature on Europeanisation studied the "European integration and its impact on domestic policies, politics and polities" and "whether domestic institutions may also be subjected to change, and whether European legislation affects domestic policy making"⁶³ (see also Héritier et al. 2001; Thatcher 2004; Falkner et al 2005; Schmidt 2006). The reason for this sudden burst of popularity can be attributed to the newly joined small states. Many of these fresh member states were undergoing fundamental changes and kind of scholarship focused predominantly on "positive integration such as environmental policies"⁶⁴.

The start of a new decade signaled a declining interest in the study of small member states. Two reasons may explain this: first, the onset of the global financial crisis in the second half of the decade threw the EU (and the Eurozone) into a financial crisis; second, the Europeanisation process in states that had joined in 2004 was coming to an end and a period of domestic political "normalization" had begun. Because of this, no single topic can be said to dominate from 2010 onward. The full onset of the Treat of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, posed limitation on the Council presidency and saw the foreign policy agenda-setting competencies granted to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Recent studies, such as Steinmetz and Wivel's (2010) "*Small States in Europe*", mostly concentrate on the institutional changes within the European Union and its effects on small states in the EU⁶⁵. Also, Szabó (2011) has looked at how the Lisbon Treaty has affected and re-structured the role of the rotating presidency⁶⁶. This thesis continues in this tradition and focuses on small member states ability to influence EU foreign policy (through the Eastern Partnership initiative) in the new post-Lisbon institutional environment.

⁶¹ Kronsell, Annica. 2002. "Can Small States Influence EU Norms? Insights From Sweden's Participation in the Field of Environmental Politics". *Scandinavian Studies* 74.

⁶² Björkdahl, Annika. 2008. "Norm advocacy: a small state strategy to influence the EU?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 15: 135.

⁶³ Fontana, Marie-Christine. 2009. "Small States inside the outside the EU: Europeanisation and domestic policy concentration in Belgium and Switzerland". *National Centre of Competence in Research Working Paper* 36: 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ Steinmetz, Robert., Wivel, Anders. 2010: 1.

⁶⁶ Szabó, Erika Márta. 2011. "Background Vocals: What Role for the Rotating Presidency in the EU's External Relations post-Lisbon?" *Collage of Europe EU Diplomacy Paper* 5: 3.

To conclude this chapter, the study of small member states and their role, influence and behavior in the EU can be divided into three distinct periods: first, period of revival in the 1990s where the focus was primarily on the processes of integration amid rising interdependence; second, a “golden” period of 2000s, where scholars focused on Europeanisation processes and the influence of (new) member states in the EU; and third, the period from 2010 and onward saw a relative decline of the field, but popular topics included institutional changes and its effects on small member states ability to influence processes in the EU. The final part of this chapter discusses the ways one can explain small member state influence in the context of the EU.

1.5 Sources of small member state influence in EU foreign policy

The aim of this subchapter is to present the factors through which one can explain small member state influence in the context of the EU. In order to construct a working framework that can adequately explain small member state influence, I draw from various authors and their contributions to the discussion.

Realist scholarship argues that EU foreign policy is dominated by big member states and for “states with a limited material resource base, there is not much choice other than to accept the authority of large member states⁶⁷”. For example, Gegout (2002) has argued that big member states, such as France, the UK, Germany and Italy, are at the heart of EU’s foreign policy decision-making process⁶⁸. Because big member states have more capabilities, they are more likely to dominate over smaller members and override their interests. On the other hand, various authors (see Nasra 2011; Jakobsen 2009; Pastore 2013; Björkdahl 2007; Grøn and Wivel 2011; Panke 2008) have argued that small member states can, under specific circumstances, successfully affect EU policy. The analytical framework of this thesis consists of three factors that can adequately explain the sources of small member state influence in EU foreign policy and are summed up in table 6.

⁶⁷ Nasra, Skander. 2011: 165.

⁶⁸ Gegout. Catherine. 2002. “The Quint: Acknowledging the Existence of a Big Four – US Directoire at the Heart of the European Union’s Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process”. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40: 331-332.

Table 6. Sources of small member state influence.

Factor	Description
Commitment	Commitment to an issue; general salience of a policy issue.
Immaterial resources	Forerunner reputation; expertise in a policy area; possession of content and procedural knowledge.
Institutional setting	Using the rotating Council Presidency to one's own advantage.

Source: Compiled by author.

Although discourse on small member state influence has produced several explanatory factors, I only discuss the most relevant to the topic at hand. As Archer and Nugent (2002) explain, “there is no shortage of hypotheses to be tested about the small member states of the EU and their behavior⁶⁹”. Jakobsen (2009) has pointed out that different scholars have referenced different factors in their studies and that there is no single golden source of influence that small member states may utilize (see Honkanen 2002; Wallace 2005)⁷⁰.

My goal is not to identify as many sources of influence as possible, but rather to explain it as parsimoniously as possible. Therefore I have identified only those factors that can be empirically utilized. The idea is not to draw general conclusions, but to use existing theory that can adequately explain small member state influence. Taken together the three factors discussed form the theoretical framework of this thesis: first, small member states must be committed to an issue - it must be of general importance to them; second, they must possess immaterial resources, such as general expertise or they be recognized as leaders in the issue area; and third, small member states are more influential when they use the EU's institutional setting (such as the Council Presidency seat) to their advantage.

Commitment

Two elements “determine a state's commitment: the relative salience of an issue and a state's dependence on the EU to achieve its policy objectives⁷¹”. The relative salience of an issue is defined as “the extent to which an actor will put into effect its potential to influence other actors

⁶⁹ Archer, Clive., Nugent, Neill. 2002

⁷⁰ Jakobsen, Peter Viggo. 2009: 86.

⁷¹ Nasra, Skander. 2011: 167.

and the decision outcome⁷². The logic here is that “those states that attach higher levels of salience to a policy issue are likely to display higher levels of activity, strengthening their position in the policy process” even vis-à-vis large states⁷³. Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006) argue that if large states tend to be proactive in all policy areas, then small states have to prioritize “between EU policy areas, as well as within particular policy areas, in order to have necessary “administrative force” to press for their interests”⁷⁴. This rings especially true in the two cases under examination here – as I will demonstrate later, Latvia and Lithuania prioritized the Eastern Partnership initiative during their presidency of the Council of the EU period. The Eastern Partnership in turn is a policy area within the overarching EU foreign policy area.

Immaterial resources

Realist scholars assume that “the ability of a state to successfully influence is proportional to its underlying power, which is defined in terms of its access to exogenously varying material resources⁷⁵”. On the other hand, Nasra (2011) argues that immaterial resources, such as a forerunner reputation, expertise in a policy area and possession of content and procedural knowledge are a source of influence as much as material resources⁷⁶. A forerunner reputation refers to the reputation a state has among other members of the international family. A forerunner reputation can be earned by being an expert in a specific policy area - a good example is Estonia and its reputation as a forerunner in all things cyber and e-governance⁷⁷. If we define state “smallness” as a social construct and not “a static feature in time and space⁷⁸” then states can be “small” and “big” in different fields. Estonia can be “big” in cyber issues and digital governance but “small” in other issues. Reputation can help small states mitigate their perceived smallness and a good reputation build trust, making it easier for small states to bargain with other actors. The same goes for expert knowledge about the EaP and the “Eastern” region in general. Jakobsen (2009) argues that “such as reputation has been found to be of particular importance for small states lacking the authority that comes with great power status⁷⁹”. Theories of communicative action also talk about relevant knowledge that can be used to exert influence.

⁷² Arregui, Javier., Thomson, Robert. 2009. “States bargaining success in the European Union”. *Journal of European Public Policy* 16: 658.

⁷³ Nasra, Skander. 2011: 168.

⁷⁴ Thorhallsson, Baldur., Wivel, Anders. 2006: 659.

⁷⁵ Legro, Jeffrey W., Moravcsik Andrew. 1999. „Is Anybody Still a Realist?“ *International Security* 24: 17.

⁷⁶ Nasra, Skander. 2011: 169.

⁷⁷ Czina, Veronika. 2013. „*Small State Influence in the European Union: The Case of „E-stonia“*“. Master’s thesis. Central European University.

⁷⁸ Areng, Liina. 2014. „Lilliputian States in Digital Affairs and Cyber Security“. *Tallinn Paper* 4: 10.

⁷⁹ Jakobsen, Peter Viggo. 2009: 86.

Nasra (2011) refers to Ulbert and Risse (2005) who talk about how actors with relevant knowledge become key players “in a context that is densely institutionalized and based on non-hierarchical relations, especially when the institutional process is depoliticized, i.e., when the main actors lack knowledge and are uncertain about their preferences, such “knowledge brokers” [see also “norm entrepreneur”] are empowered and may find a window of opportunity to exert influence⁸⁰”.

Institutional setting

Small member states can use the institutional setting of the EU to their advantage. The EU structure can help small states exert more influence than they would normally be able to⁸¹. The rotating presidency of the Council of the EU is one such example of how the EU structure assists small states by unlocking “incompatible negotiating positions and secure efficient agreements, while simultaneously allowing the government in office to shape distributional outcomes⁸²”. In effect, the Council Presidency grants the seat holding government a power position, enabling the state to influence policy through agenda shaping. Although the Lisbon treaty made several changes to the role and function of the Council Presidency institution, such as narrowing down the agenda-shaping capacity, “the rotating Presidency is still in charge of certain meetings and can still exert its influence on the agenda via its chairing position⁸³”. According to Bengtsson, Elgström and Tallberg (2004), the “Presidency can be translated into normative power through the opportunity to launch and promote novel policy ideas and ideational frameworks and can thus be claimed to be a tool especially well-suited to small states which lack traditional power resources⁸⁴”.

I also assume that small member states gain more leverage by relying on soft bargaining strategies and “persuasion rather than coercion to be a characteristic” strategy of small member state Council Presidencies⁸⁵. Grøn and Wivel (2011) argue further that in order for small member states to take full advantage from the Presidency, they must act as “smart states”: first,

⁸⁰ Ulbert, Cornelia., Risse, Thomas. 2005. “Deliberately Changing the Discourse: What Does Make Arguing Effective?” *Acta Politica* 40: 351-67.

⁸¹ Nugent, Neill. 2007. „Cyprus and the European Union: The Significance of its Smallness, Both as an Applicant and a Member“. *Journal of European Integration* 28: 62.

⁸² Tallberg, Jonas. 2004. „The Power of the Presidency: Brokerage, Efficiency and Distribution in EU Negotiations“. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42: 999.

⁸³ Szabó, Erika Márta. 2011: 8.

⁸⁴ Bengtsson, Rikard., Elgström, Ole., Tallberg, Jonas. 2004. “Silencer or Amplifier? The European Union Presidency and the Nordic Countries”. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27: 314.

⁸⁵ Grøn, Caroline. H., Wivel, Anders. 2011. „Maximizing Influence in the European Union after the Lisbon Treaty: From Small State Policy to Smart State Strategy“. *Journal of European Integration* 33: 525.

they must focus their limited resources and concentrate only on issues of high importance; second, small member states must look after the interests of the EU as a whole and not focus on their narrow national interests⁸⁶.

To conclude, the three factors do not exclude the possibility that additional sources of influence can be detected. Commitment to an policy issue, immaterial resources and the ability to use the EU's institutional setting to one's own advantage all contribute to small member state's ability to influence EU foreign policy, but many not be suitable in other policy contexts. Influence is a tricky concept. The next methodology chapter will discuss just how difficult "measuring" influence in the post-Lisbon context can be. The aim is not only to discuss, but to also synthesize a novel influence measuring framework. The third and final chapter will then test this new framework on three cases – the Council presidencies of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*: 529.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter specifies the research method used in this thesis. The chapter is divided into four sections – the first subchapter explains the logic behind small-N research design; the second focuses on case selection and the data used; the third subchapter presents the hypothesis to be tested; the fourth subchapter discusses different influence “measuring” frameworks and presents the method used in this thesis.

2.1 Small-N research design and its drawbacks

The aim of this thesis is simple enough – to investigate the extent small member states, such as Latvia and Lithuania, have been able to influence EU foreign policy using the Eastern Partnership initiative as an overarching case study. Within this case study, three sub-case studies can be found – the Council Presidencies of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In the previous chapter, Latvia and Lithuania were conceptualized as “small states” and Poland as a “big state”. Hence, the Polish case is used for comparison purposes because, as I explain later, all three countries identified the EaP as a key priority during their respective presidency periods. The way I employ these three case studies does not imply that my goal is to generate generalizable knowledge about small state behavior. Implying that generalizable knowledge claims can be made about the world “out there” would mean that these three case studies make the ontological assumption that “there are recognizable regularities and a recognizable order in the world⁸⁷”. In a sense, a rigid (“scientific”) causal explanation is not what I aim to achieve with this thesis.

Instead I assume a qualitative approach and argue that although influence is possible and “measurable” to an extent, the explanations for it depend on institutional settings and may vary from EU policy area to policy area. From an epistemological point of view, I presume that “some phenomena are not governed by causal laws but, at best, by probabilistic ones⁸⁸. Here I agree with constructivism and with Kratochwil (2008), who explains that “theories are not descriptions to be evaluated by their literal correspondence to some discoverable reality, but partial ways of understanding the world, which should be compared with each other for their

⁸⁷ H  ritier, Adrienne. 2008. „Causal explanation“. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, eds. Donatella della Porta, Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 61.

⁸⁸ Porta, Donatella della., Keating, Michael. 2008. „How many approaches in the social sciences? An epistemological introduction“. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, eds. Donatella della Porta, Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 61.

explanatory power⁸⁹”. In short, this thesis is case oriented – it aims at “rich descriptions of a few instances of a certain phenomenon⁹⁰”.

The aim here is to study the effect small member states can have on one EU policy area – its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Following a probabilistic logic, one can argue that the probability of influencing EU foreign policy is higher when small member states: 1) fully commit themselves to a policy area that they consider to be important; 2) possess certain immaterial resources (such as expertise in the policy area); 3) use the EU structure (such as the Presidency of the Council of the EU) to their advantage. In light of this, a small-N (one to few cases) research design is an obvious choice here because of the number of cases under investigation in this thesis. A large-N design would entail a statistical analysis of many cases with the goal of making generalizable inferences. As Porta (2008) mentions, the “case-oriented strategy focuses upon a relatively small number of cases, analyzed with attention to each case as an interpretable whole, seeking to understand a complex unity rather than establish relationships between variables” and that “in contrast, case-based logic tends to explore diversity (and deviant cases) by thick description of one or small number of cases, often contrasted on several dimensions⁹¹”. Two developments limit the number of cases that could be investigated in light of the goals set out in this thesis: one, the amount of data available (more on this in the next subchapter); and two, the number of member states that have proclaimed the Eastern Partnership as a top priority in their time as Council presidents. This makes it hard to (at least for now) conduct a large-N (statistical) analysis of small member state influence on certain kind of foreign policy initiatives.

The “drawbacks” of using the small-N research design is that instead of aiming at generalizable knowledge and statistical correlation, it focuses on uncovering complexities within cases and concrete knowledge about specific processes⁹². What does this mean for the study of small member state influence in EU? Although no generalizable statements can be made, focusing on certain EU policy priorities (such as the Eastern Partnership initiative), one can test context specific hypothesis that do not aim at universality.

⁸⁹ Kratochwil, Friedrich. 2008. “Constructivism: what it is (not) and how it matters”. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, eds. Donatella della Porta, Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 80-99.

⁹⁰ Porta, Donatella della. 2008. “Comparative analysis: case-oriented versus variable-oriented research”. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, eds. Donatella della Porta, Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 198.

⁹¹ *Ibid*: 204-207.

⁹² *Ibid*: 203.

2.2 Selection of cases and data

This subchapter discusses the logic behind case and data selection. In order to draw any kind of inferences, comparison as an analytical tool must be utilized. As Landman (2008) notes, cases in a small-N study have to be “intentionally selected and [the sample size has to be] significantly smaller than a global selection⁹³”. Two factors limit the number of cases available to investigate: first, the limited amount of member states that have prioritized one certain policy initiative (the Eastern Partnership in this case); and second, the availability of analyzable data. If in large-N variable oriented studies, “methods of sample selection are usually constrained by statistical rules”, then case-oriented research usually “focuses particularly on positive cases, that is cases where a phenomena (such as member states that focus on the EaP during their Council presidencies) is present⁹⁴”. Gerring (2001), among other things, also refers to comparability when he talks about case selection based on similarity among cases on some relevant issues⁹⁵.

As noted in the last subchapter, the three cases “revolve” around one “mother” case – the Eastern Partnership initiative. The main disadvantage with this setup is that the conclusions drawn in this thesis might not be replicable outside this restricted area, as the Eastern Partnership is just one of EU’s foreign policy initiatives. As Porta (2008) finds, this disadvantage means that when we compare cases within similar systems, “we cannot go beyond so-called middle-range theories – theories that apply only in a restricted area⁹⁶”. The availability of data also limits the number of cases that are available to investigate in this context. As a qualitative study, no statistical data will be collected or used. Instead I rely on a variety of secondary sources, progress reports, presidency programs, joint declarations, archival data, policy papers, speeches, official documents and news articles. These sources are then used to determine the levels of goal achievement and ascription in both the bilateral and multilateral tracks of the Eastern Partnership. The next subchapter will discuss the research questions and main hypothesis to be tested in this thesis.

⁹³ Landman, Todd. 2008. *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: 68.

⁹⁴ Porta, Donatella della. 2008: 212.

⁹⁵ Gerring, John. 2001. *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 164.

⁹⁶ Porta, Donatella della. 2008: 214.

2.3 Competing hypothesis on small member state influence

This thesis is driven by four research questions. First, can small EU member states influence EU foreign policy? Second, how can we explain their potential influence? Third, how can we “measure” influence? And fourth, how much influence have they actually exerted? Obviously this thesis would be very short if the answer to the first question is a clear “no”. Instead, as I’ve already discussed in the last chapter, small member states have a higher probability of influencing EU foreign policy if they a) show commitment and prioritize a certain issue area (such as the Eastern Partnership initiative); b) they possess certain immaterial resources, like a forerunner reputation or expertise in a certain issue area; and c) they use the EU’s institutional setup to their advantage (utilizing the Council Presidency for example).

Turning now to the other two questions – the “measuring” mechanism and the amount of influence small member states actually exert. How can one determine the amount of influence on a case that exhibits all three theoretical prerequisites mentioned above? I propose three sets of hypothesis to be tested on the three cases based on the dimensions through which influence is measured in this thesis. First, the Eastern Partnership joint initiative has two tracks: the bilateral and the multilateral. Vandecasteele *et al* (2013) find that the Presidency has more influence on the bilateral track than the multilateral⁹⁷. From the small member state angle, we can test the following two hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1A: Small states have more influence on the bilateral relations than on multilateral.

Hypothesis 1B: Small states have more influence on multilateral relationships than on bilateral.

The second set of hypothesis focuses on goal achievement. As I discuss in the next chapter, goal achievement is usually “measured” by comparing outputs (final outcomes) with the inputs (agenda). Therefore I propose that:

Hypothesis 2A: Small member states have more influence on the agenda than on the final outcomes.

Hypothesis 2B: Small member states have more influence on the final outcomes than on the agenda.

⁹⁷ Vandecasteele, Bruno., Bossuyt, Fabienne., Orbie, Jan. 2013. „Unpacking the influence of the Council Presidency on European Union external policies: The Polish Council Presidency and the Eastern Partnership“. *European Integration Online Papers* 1: 20.

The third indicator I'll be looking at is the level of ascription - how much of the inputs and outputs can actually be ascribed to the presidency and how much to other EU institutions involved. The ascription indicator allows me to test the following hypothesis combination:

Hypothesis 3A: The overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is lower.

Hypothesis 3B: The overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is higher.

When goal achievement is high and the level of ascription is low, the presidency's influence on the inputs/outputs equals or exceeds that of other actors. If both goal achievement and the level of ascription are high, the presidency's influence on the inputs/outputs is lower than that of the EU institutions. This is explained more in detail below in the final section of this chapter.

2.4 Defining and measuring influence

The aim of this subchapter is to operationalize "influence". First, I will discuss previous measurement frameworks and second, I will then argue that influence should be determined through two core factors – goal achievement and the level of ascription. In short, my research focuses on actions taken by the three actors during their Council Presidency periods and their influence on both the input (agenda-setting) and the output (final outcomes) across the bilateral and the multilateral tracks of the Eastern Partnership initiative. Graph 1 illustrates the exact logic behind the framework used in this thesis.

Measuring "influence" is related to the classical problem of measuring "power"⁹⁸. According to Baldwin (2013), it is "often useful to distinguish among such power terms as power, influence, control, coercion, force, persuasion, deterrence, compellence, inducement and so on"⁹⁹. Dahl's (1957) classical definition of power is: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do"¹⁰⁰. But power is "not always converted into influence and, alternatively, actors may exert influence even without being powerful"¹⁰¹. We may "infer the political power of an actor from his political influence, the

⁹⁸ Lindell, Ulf., Persson, Stefan. 1986: 80.

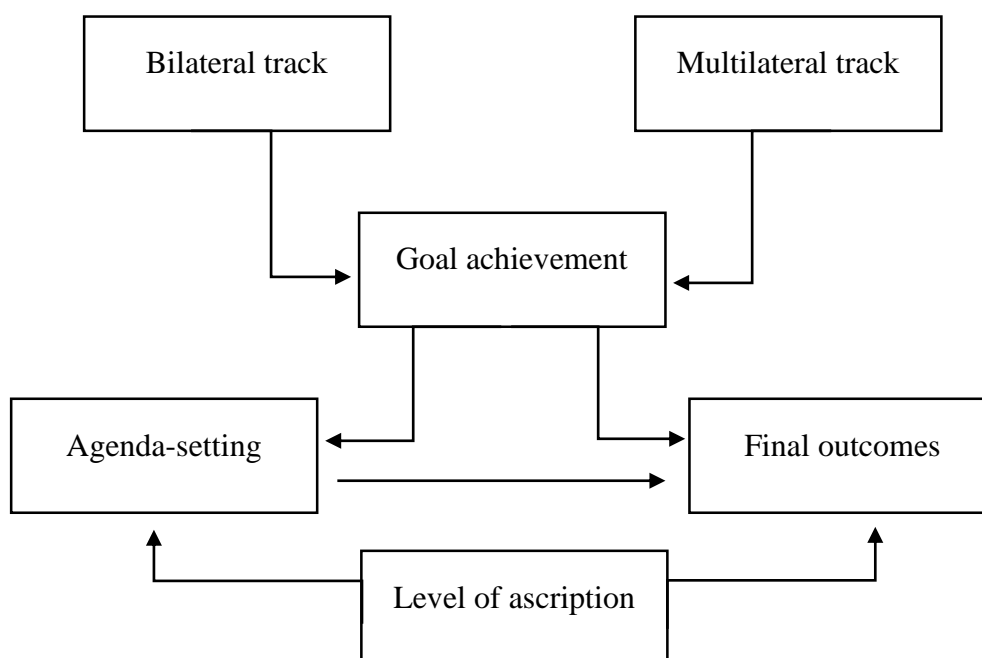
⁹⁹ Baldwin, David. A. 2013. "Power and International Relations". *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, Beth A. Simmons. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publication.

¹⁰⁰ Dahl, Robert. A. 1957. "The Concept of Power". *Behavioral Science* 2: 202-203.

¹⁰¹ Vandecasteele, Bruno., Bossuyt, Fabienne., Orbie, Jan. 2013: 5

former being a kind of generalization of the other¹⁰²”. Indeed, as Cox and Jacobsen (1973) note: “influence is to be distinguished from power – power means capability; it is the aggregate of political resources that are available to an actor and may be converted into influence, but it is not necessarily so converted at all or to its full extent¹⁰³”. Instead of focusing on small member states power *over* something or somebody, I use Bunse’s (2009) conceptualization and define influence as “intentionally changing an outcome from what it would have been in the absence of an action¹⁰⁴”. In the context of this study, influence is thus a process by which small member states intentionally change the outcome of a policy (in this case, the Eastern Partnership initiative).

Graph 1. Flowchart illustrating the research framework employed in this thesis.



Source: Compiled by author.

Several authors have written on the political influence assessment topic (see Banfield 1961; Arts and Verschuren 1999; Vandecasteele, Bossuyt and Fabienne 2013). As is to be expected, measuring influence proves to be tricky. The problem lies in the non-quantifiable nature of influence itself as “there is no quantitative tool that can adequately capture performance in foreign policy as in economic policy or social policy (like unemployment rate, crime rate,

¹⁰² Arts, Bas., Verschuren, Piet. 1999. „Assessing Political Influence in Complex Decision-making: An Instrument Based on Triangulation“. *International Political Science Review* 20: 412.

¹⁰³ Cox, Robert., Jacobson K. Harold. 1973. *The Anatomy of Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press: 3.

¹⁰⁴. Bunse, Simone. 2009. *Small States and EU Governance: Leadership through the Council Presidency*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 5.

pollution levels, etc.)¹⁰⁵”. Majority of the studies that grade influence do it by looking at how policy inputs (or the agenda) match up against the outcomes. For example, the European Foreign Policy Scorecard evaluates Europe’s external relations performance by comparing between European foreign policy objectives and the outcomes¹⁰⁶. Weisensee (2010) employs a similar input vs. output framework in his analysis of EU foreign policy impact on the Georgian crisis of 2008. His framework “provides a four-category system (nil, marginal, considerable and significant political impact) in order to determine the effectiveness of European foreign policy impact and allows [me] to classify each single foreign policy action accordingly¹⁰⁷”.

Arts and Verschuren (1999) on the other hand construct an elaborate method of their own – the three dimensional EAR instrument. The EAR method consist of: 1) the ego-perception dimension which “views key players with regard to their own influence (or its lack) on key topics in complex decision-making; 2) the alter-perception, focusing on “views of the other players with regard to the influence (or its lack) of “ego” on key topics in complex decision-making; 3) researcher’s own analysis that acts as a “validity check of ego- and alter-perceptions by the researcher on the basis of the indicators “goal-achievement”, “intervention”, and “anticipation”¹⁰⁸. In short, they combine “goal-achievement” with expert interviews with key players both inside and outside of the decision-making framework. The EAR method is also utilized by Vandecasteele (2013) in his own study of the Council Presidency as an institutional facilitator for political influence. In addition to expert interviews, he uses three indicators, measured on an interval scale, in order to assess the presidency’s political influence: 1) goal achievement; 2) ascription of goal achievement (the extent to which goal achievement can be ascribed to the presidency); 3) and political relevance (how politically (un-)important the final output was)¹⁰⁹”.

The framework used in this thesis uses a modified version of Vandecasteele’s (2014) framework, but omits the “political relevance” indicator, as it’s not essential to this study. I also divide the “level of ascription” indicator into two: ascription of agenda-setting and final outcomes. This allows me to assess the “beginning” and the “end” of a policy process separately

¹⁰⁵ European Council on Foreign Relations. 2015. “Methodology”. *European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2015*. <http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2015/extras/methodology>

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁷ Weisensee, Jan. 2010. „Measring European Foreign Policy Impact: The EU and the Georgia Crisis of 2008“. *EU Diplomacy Papers* 9: 7.

¹⁰⁸ Arts, Bas., Verschuren, Piet. 1999: 417.

¹⁰⁹ Vandecasteele, Bruno. 2014. “Influence of the Lithuanian presidency of the EU Council on EU Relations with countries of the Eastern Partnership”. *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 31: 40-41.

and give a more nuanced answer as to who actually influenced the initiative. As illustrated in graph 1, I assess influence on both the bilateral and the multilateral tracks of the Eastern Partnership. The bilateral track refers to the individual deepening of relations between the six partner countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and the EU. It “supports political and socio-economic reforms in partner countries in order to: 1) foster political association and further economic integration with the EU; 2) enhance sector cooperation; 3) support mobility of citizens and visa-free travel as long-term goal¹¹⁰”. The bilateral track is “underpinned by a multilateral framework that enables to organize regular panel meetings, seminars and training programs for all the partner countries together and consist of four platforms: 1) democracy, good governance and stability; 2) economic integration and convergence with EU policies; 3) energy security; 4) contacts between people¹¹¹”. I will assess the policy influence of each case on both the bilateral relations with the six partner countries and on the four multilateral platforms.

Two main indicators will be used to assess each presidency’s political influence – goal achievement and the level of ascription. The operationalization of the indicators is shown in Table 7. First, goal achievement (GA) refers to the extent to which the presidency’s goals were achieved. This is measured by comparing the inputs with outputs. While Vandecasteele *et al* (2014) use four thresholds (on an interval scale from 0 to 3), I employ three for the sake of parsimony: when no goals were achieved, the level of GA is “none”; when the output only partially contradicts the goals, the level of GA is limited to moderate; and when the output does not contradict the presidency’s goals, the level of GA is considerable to high.

The second indicator is the level of ascription – how much of the inputs and outputs can actually be ascribed to the presidency and how much to other actors (EU institutions) involved. A low level of ascription means that the member state had little to no influence on the input (agenda)/output (outcome); a limited to moderate level of ascription implies moderate influence; a high level of ascription means that the institutions had little to no influence on the input (agenda)/output (outcome). In comparison with Vandecasteele’s *et al* (2014) framework, I have changed the method in a way that allows me to assess the level of ascription in the agenda-setting phase and on the final output (final outcome).

¹¹⁰ The European Commission. “Eastern Partnership”.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/eastern-partnership/index_en.htm

¹¹¹ Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership. „Eastern Partnership”. <http://eceap.eu/en/eastern-partnership/>

Table 7. Indicators for assessing the presidency's political influence

Indicator	Level	Description
Goal Achievement (GA)	None	The (non-)output entirely contradicts the presidency's input.
	Limited to moderate	The (non-)output partially contradicts the presidency's input.
	Considerable to high	The (non-)output does not contradict the presidency's input.
Ascription of Agenda Setting (AS)	None	The presidency was not involved as a chair, or was involved but had no role in developing the input (agenda).
	Limited to Moderate	The presidency was involved as a chair to a limited extent, but other actors also played a role in developing the input (agenda)
	Considerable to high	The presidency was heavily involved in the agenda-setting process (input).
Ascription of Final Outcomes (AFO)	None	The presidency was not involved as a chair, or was involved but did not contribute to the output (final outcome).
	Limited to Moderate	The presidency was involved as a chair to a limited extent, but other actors also contributed to the output (final outcome).
	Considerable to high	The presidency was heavily involved and it is unlikely the final output (outcome) would have been the same if the chair would not have been involved.

Source: Partially based on Vandecasteele *et al.* 2014: 42-43.

As not to give a false impression that influence is somehow quantifiable, I refrain from using numbers. Defining a single threshold is problematic, as there is no clear line between a “moderate” and a “significant” levels of influence. Just like attempting to define small states using population size as a metric, there is no obvious answer to this problem. It is important to acknowledge and watch out for any personal biases the researcher may have. Any classification exercise has to be based on valid and reliable data. Therefore I agree with Arts, and Verschuren's (1999) when they conclude that their method “sticks to the level of informed

guesses and may, in some cases, remain more of a guess than an informed conclusion (but this is probably a drawback for any method to assess influence or power)¹¹²”.

¹¹² Arts, Bas., Verschuren, Piet. 1999: 422.

3. THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE AND THE COUNCIL PRESIDENCIES OF LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND POLAND

The aim of the last chapter is to analyze and compare the Council Presidencies of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland using the theoretical and methodological framework discussed in the two previous chapters. In order to provide a background for the analysis, the first subchapter will discuss the history of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and its regional and multilateral cooperation initiative – the Eastern Partnership, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) and the Black Sea Synergy initiative. The second subchapter explores the commitment to and the general salience of the Eastern Partnership initiative in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The third subchapter aims to explain how the post-Lisbon Council Presidency has been used as an influence exerting tool by the three cases. In the fourth subchapter, I apply the methodological framework and explore the influence exerted by the three cases. The results of this exercise will be compared in the fifth and last part of this chapter.

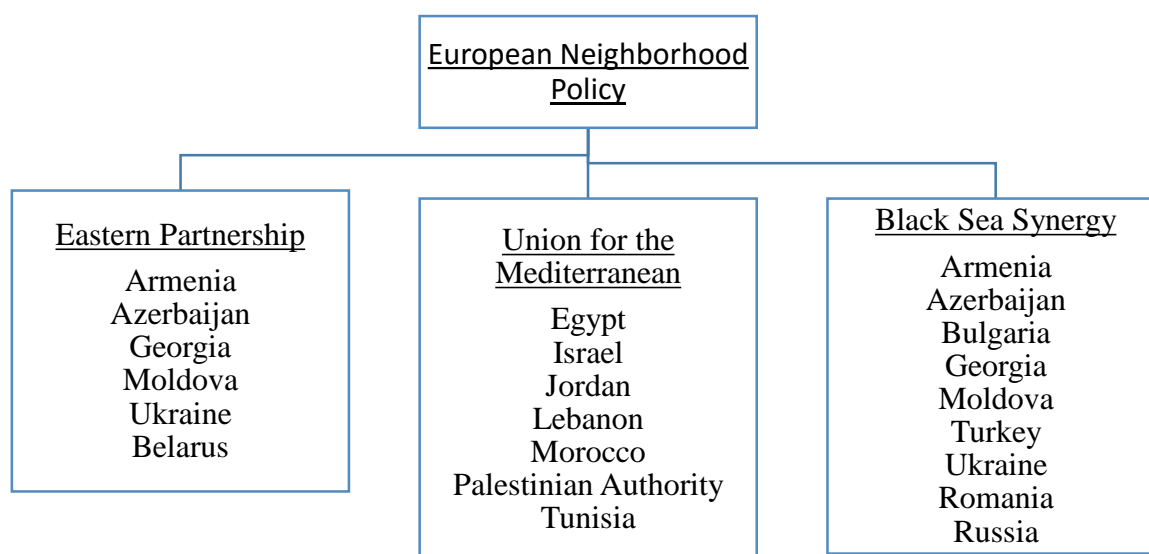
3.1 The European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership initiative

The aim here is to provide a layer of depth to this thesis by briefly outlining the history of the European Neighborhood Policy and its complementary regional multilateral cooperation initiatives, including the Eastern Partnership. I trace the development of the ENP from its beginnings in a 2003 European Commission communication to a broad post-Lisbon policy that it is today. The ENP is a “chiefly a bilateral policy between the European Union and each partner country, but it is complemented by three multilateral cooperation initiatives – Eastern Partnership, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (also the Union for the Mediterranean) and the Black Sea Synergy¹¹³”. The gravitational pull of the EU means that there are currently 16 ENP countries with 12 states participating as fully fledged partners. So far, the Eastern Partnership includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. The Union for the Mediterranean includes Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority and Tunisia. The EU also wanted Russia to be involved with the ENP, but “in subsequent negotiations it was decided that a separate policy instrument would be developed to guide

¹¹³ European Union External Action Service. “European Neighborhood Policy”. http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/about-us/index_en.htm

Russian-European foreign policy – the EU-Russia strategic partnership¹¹⁴”. The Black Sea Synergy is different from the other two initiatives. It is “essentially a regional initiative, open to all Black Sea States and has very specific objectives established in three key sectors: environment, transport and energy¹¹⁵”. The Black Sea NGO forum was launched in 2008 and includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania and Russia¹¹⁶. Graph 2 illustrates the distribution of the different ENP initiatives and partners.

Graph 2. The European Neighborhood Policy and its regional cooperation initiatives.



Source: Compiled by author.

Several cross-border neighborhood cooperation policy mechanisms preceded the ENP: INTERREG (help facilitate cross-border cooperation within the EU), TACIS (support for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), MEDA (support cooperation between Mediterranean states and the EU), PHARE (support for East European states in the EU accession process) and CARDS (support for Balkan countries)¹¹⁷. One of the reasons that prompted the creation of the EAP was the need to mitigate the disorder created by this smorgasbord of different cross-border cooperation initiatives. The EAP’s origin can be traced to a document released in 2003 titled: “The Wider Europe Neighborhood, A New Framework

¹¹⁴ Wesselink, Edzard., Boschma, Ron. 2012. “Overview of the European Neighborhood Policy: Its History, Structure, and Implemented Policy Measure”. *Search Working Paper* 1: 8-9.

¹¹⁵ European Commission. 2010. “Black Sea Synergy memo”. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-10-78_en.htm?locale=en

¹¹⁶ European External Action Service. “Black Sea Synergy”. http://www.eeas.europa.eu/blacksea/index_en.htm

¹¹⁷ Commission of the European Communities. 2004. “Laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument”. *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council* COM(2004) 628.

for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors”. This communication from the Commission to the Council and the Parliament stipulates the relations of the EU with its outer borders after the fifth enlargement round, which saw EU’s borders shifted markedly further east. This communication announced a “proposal to unify the European Union’s wide range of policies towards its neighboring countries” with the goal of “creating a ring of friendly, stable and prosperous countries around the European Union in order to guarantee stability along the outer borders of the EU¹¹⁸”. The idea was to “rationalize and streamline this complex and sometimes overlapping set of programs¹¹⁹”. Two further communications from the Commission have set out to revise the ENP – “Strengthening the ENP” (2006) and “A Strong European Neighborhood” (2007). The first communication seeks to offer the partner countries “improved trade and investment prospects, making people-to-people contacts and legitimate short-term travel easier, being more active in addressing frozen conflicts, and opening more possibilities to mobilize funding¹²⁰”. The second communication focuses on economic integration, mobility, regional conflicts and political dialogue, sectoral reform and modernization, participation in Community programs and financial cooperation¹²¹. An additional revitalized carrots-for-reform ENP strategy was launched in 2011 which “seeks to strengthen individual and regional relationships between the EU and countries in its neighborhood through a “more funds for more reform” approach – making more additional funds available, but with more mutual accountability¹²²”.

The ENP’s aim is to create Action Plans (or Association Agendas for Eastern partners) for the partner countries which demonstrates “their commitment to democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development with the EU supporting these achievement with financial support, economic integration and access to the EU markets, easing travel to the EU, and technical and policy support¹²³”. The first Action Plans were created in 2004 for Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The EU/ENP signs two kinds of

¹¹⁸ Wesselink, Edzard., Boschma, Ron. 2012: 6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*: 8.

¹²⁰ Commission of the European Communities. 2006. “On Strengthening the European Neighborhood Policy”. *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament* COM(2006) 726.

¹²¹ Commission of the European Communities. 2007. “A Strong European Neighborhood Policy”. *Communication from the Commission* COM(2007) 774.

¹²² European Commission press release. 2011. “A New and Ambitions European Neighborhood Policy”. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-643_en.htm?locale=en

¹²³ European Union External Action Service. “European Neighborhood Policy”. http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/about-us/index_en.htm

agreements with third countries - Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and Association Agreements. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) were at first meant to regulate EU relations with the “New Independent States of Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia¹²⁴”. The PCA’s were basically a lighter version of the Association Agreements which are “all-embracing frameworks [that] intent to establish close economic and political cooperation (more than simple cooperation) that in some cases prepare for future membership of the EU¹²⁵”. While the goals of the ENP might seem simple – promote democracy, rule of law and structural reforms in partner countries by providing financial support and other incentives such as easing of travel restrictions - it has not escaped criticism. Some southern member states see the policy as geographically “arbitrary”, as it puts too much emphasis on its eastern neighbors, while the members in the east favor the intensification of relations with their eastern neighborhood¹²⁶. Some critics also argue that although the ENP’s methodology is “derived from EU’s enlargement experience, accession is not promised¹²⁷”.

The Eastern Partnership, together with the Union for the Mediterranean, is one of the two geographically defined ENP policy initiatives that “enables partner countries interested in moving towards the EU and increasing political, economic and cultural links to do so¹²⁸”. Since its inauguration, four EaP summits (the highest level meetings within the EaP framework) have taken place – Prague on 7 May 2009, Warsaw on 29-30 September 2011, Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013 and in Riga on 21-22 May 2015. The EaP itself has its roots in a 2008 proposal by the Polish and Swedish governments that calls to reinforce the “European offer in the Eastern direction and to develop an Eastern Partnership that should be based on, but go beyond the current ENP, confirming, on the one hand, the differentiation principle towards the neighbors, in line with the ENP, and on the other hand, strengthening horizontal links between these neighbors and the EU¹²⁹” and suggests the creation of a two-track bilateral and multilateral policy instrument.

¹²⁴ *Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs): Russia, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia*. Last updated: 2010. r17002.

¹²⁵ European Union External Action Service. “Association Agreements”. <http://eeas.europa.eu/association/>

¹²⁶ Lippert, Barbara. 2007. “The EU Neighborhood Policy – Profile, Potential, Perspective”. *Intereconomics*: 181-182.

¹²⁷ Lehne, Stefan. 2014. “Time to Reset the European Neighborhood Policy”. *Carnegie Europe*. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/publications/?fa=54420>

¹²⁸ Estonian Centre of Eastern Partnership. “Eastern Partnership (EaP)”. <http://eceap.eu/en/eastern-partnership/>

¹²⁹ Polish-Swedish Proposal. 2008. “Eastern Partnership”. <http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/sites/default/files/attachments/Polish-Swedish%20Proposal.pdf>

Table 8. The Eastern Partnership partner countries and their relationship with the EU.

Partner country	Agreement type and year of signing	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement (DCFTA)	Visa facilitation and readmission agreements
Armenia	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (signed 1999). Association Agreement negotiated but not signed. ¹³⁰	No	Visa facilitation and readmission agreement (entered into force 2014)
Azerbaijan	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (signed 1999) ¹³¹	No	Visa facilitation and readmission agreement (2014)
Belarus	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (signed 1995) ¹³²	No	Visa facilitation negotiations started (2014)
Georgia	Association Agreement (signed 2014) ¹³³	Yes	Visa facilitation and readmission agreement (2011)
Moldova	Association Agreement (signed 2014) ¹³⁴	Yes	Visa facilitation and readmission agreement (2008)
Ukraine	Association Agreement (signed 2014) ¹³⁵	Yes	Visa facilitation and readmission agreement (2008)

Source: Compiled by author.

The initiative was officially launched the next year at the Prague Summit on May 2009 (the Union for the Mediterranean was launched a year before). The joint declaration also established the new Association Agreements and with it the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreements, “where the positive effects of trade and investment liberalization will be

¹³⁰ European Union External Action. “EU Relations with Armenia”.

http://eeas.europa.eu/armenia/index_en.htm

¹³¹ *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Azerbaijan*. 1999. 99/614/EC

¹³² “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Belarus”. 1995. *Agreements and Conventions*.

¹³³ European Union External Action. “EU Relations with Georgia”.

http://eeas.europa.eu/georgia/about/index_en.htm

¹³⁴ European Union External Action. “EU Relations with Moldova”.

http://eeas.europa.eu/moldova/index_en.htm

¹³⁵ Union External Action. “EU Relations with Ukraine”. http://eeas.europa.eu/ukraine/about/index_en.htm

strengthened by regulatory approximation leading to convergence with EU laws and standards¹³⁶”. So far, three partner countries have signed an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement (DCFTA) – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Table 8 above specifies the type of agreements and years of signing. It needs to be emphasized that the EaP “is a joint policy of the EU and its Eastern Partners, and all parties bear responsibility for its implementation with the European Commission and the European External Action service being responsible for the EaP from the EU side¹³⁷”.

The bilateral relations between the EU and the partner countries is supported by the Comprehensive Institution Building Program (CIB) through which the EU will develop individual programs aimed at improving their “administrative capacity, including through training, technical assistance and any appropriate innovative measures¹³⁸”. The multilateral track is “aimed at fostering links among partner countries themselves and will be a forum for discussion on further developments of the Eastern Partnership¹³⁹”. Four platforms are organized in this framework: 1) democracy, good governance and stability; 2) economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies; 3) energy security; 4) contacts with people.

3.2 Commitment to the Eastern Partnership initiative and the immaterial resources of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland

This subchapter expands on the first two theoretical premises mentioned in the previous chapter: 1) that smaller member states who “attach higher levels of salience to a policy issue are likely to display higher levels of activity, strengthening their position in the policy process¹⁴⁰” even vis-à-vis large states; 2) and that immaterial resources, such as a forerunner reputation, expertise in a policy area and possession of content and procedural knowledge are a source of influence. The aim is to tie these two assumptions with the existing evidence on the importance of the EaP for each case and on the immaterial resources that each case “possesses”. If one is to agree with a post-positivist ontology, then no state can be said to be in the possession

¹³⁶ Council of the European Union press release. 2009. „Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit“. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf

¹³⁷ Gromadzki, Grzegorz. 2015. *The Eastern Partnership After Five Years: Time for a Deep Rethinking*. Brussels: European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs: 9.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*

¹³⁹ Council of the European Union press release. 2009. „Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit“.

¹⁴⁰ Nasra, Skander. 2011: 168.

of a certain objective qualities. Instead, qualities are attributed or constructed through “social practices which on the one hand shapes social reality and on the other hand is influenced by it¹⁴¹”. This is to say that a “forerunner reputation” is something that is socially constructed through discourse and is not something that exists objectively or in “reality”. The constructive “character of discourse is expressed by its ability to generate the identity of its actors, their mutual relations and knowledge about the world¹⁴²”. My aim is not to conduct a full-blown discourse analysis, but to identify each cases commitment to the EaP and the immaterial resources they possess by examining official documents and some of the elite discourse.

Latvia

Latvia’s presidency, which ran from January to June 2015, had three main priorities: enchanting EU’s competitiveness, developing the Digital Single Market and digitalization of the public sector, and the European Neighborhood Policy¹⁴³. The EaP enjoys a high level of attention within official presidency program which proclaims that “Latvia will continue strengthening the Eastern Partnership as an inclusive platform and promoting a more individual and differentiated approach in cooperation with each of the Eastern Partnership countries in accordance with their own ambitions¹⁴⁴”. Latvia’s commitment to the EaP was further elaborated by the president of Latvia Andris Bērziņš at the Eastern Partnership Business Forum where he remarks: “Thanks to participation in the European single market, favorable geographical location, and accumulated experience, development of cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries is among priorities of Latvia and thus, it is one of the priorities of the Latvian Presidency and it will remain such in the future as well¹⁴⁵”.

The prioritization of the “East” by Latvia is nothing new and is usually justified with Latvia’s historical affinity for the region and its transition experience from a state-controlled planned economy to a democratic capitalist country. Commentators often mention geographical

¹⁴¹ Fairclough, Norman., Wodak, Ruth. 1997. “Critical discourse analysis: an overview”. *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction*, eds. Teun A. van Dijk. London; Thousand Oaks; New-Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd: 55.

¹⁴² Lipinski, Artur. 2013. “The Presidency as a task. The image of Poland’s presidency of the Council of the European Union in selected Polish weekly magazines”. *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne* 3: 208.

¹⁴³ The programme of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. 2015. “Strategic Framework and Presidency Priorities”. https://eu2015.lv/images/PRES_prog_2015_EN-final.pdf

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁵ Bērziņš, Andris. 2015. „Speech of the President of Latvia Andris Bērziņš at the Eastern Partnership Business Forum”. http://president.lv/pk/content/?art_id=23061

proximity to the “East”, its “strategic location at the crossroads between East and West¹⁴⁶” and its “geographic location, place in geopolitics and historical memory¹⁴⁷” as an asset. Prior to the presidency, Latvia’s foreign minister Edgars Rinkēvičs also emphasized the importance of geography and history when he comments that “Latvia has been actively participating in the elaboration and implementation of the EaP and due to the geographical closeness and historical affinity, cooperation with our Eastern Neighbors is of particular importance for our foreign policy¹⁴⁸”. The accentuation of “historical affinity”, “regional expertise”, “historical memory” and “favorable geographical location” is something that all three cases have in common – they all agree that these immaterial resources can be used as an asset in the development of the common EU foreign policy.

Lithuania

The Lithuanian presidency ran from July to December 2013 and similarly to Latvia, also defined three main objectives: enhancing the credibility of the financial sector, economic growth through investment into research and technology, and tackling global challenges and contributing to a safer neighborhood¹⁴⁹. According to the official presidency program, “one of the key priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency is the development of EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries and strengthening their political association and economic integration with the EU¹⁵⁰”. The EaP is also privileged throughout the “preparatory documents for the presidency, from the 2011 Seimas resolution on presidency priorities up the final program¹⁵¹”. Similarly to Latvia, Lithuania’s solidarity with its Eastern neighbors can be attributed to a shared history and their “attitude towards their common neighbor, Russia, and Latvia’s and Lithuania’s real desire to help the post-Soviet countries to adopt the European values of democracy, rule of law and market economy¹⁵²”.

¹⁴⁶ Maxwell, Alexander. 2011. “Bridges and Bulwarks: A Historiographical Overview of East-West Discourses”. *The East-West Discourse: Symbolic Geography and its Consequences*. Eds, Alexander Maxwell. Bern: Peter Lang: 2.

¹⁴⁷ Muravska, Tatjana. 2015. “Focus of Latvia’s presidency is future of the EU’s Eastern Partnership”. <http://europesworld.org/2015/02/23/focus-latvias-presidency-future-eus-eastern-partnerships/#.VmLRHImLTIU>

¹⁴⁸ European Dialogue. 2012. „Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia Edgars Rinkevics“. <http://www.eurodialogue.eu/eu-central-asia/Edgars-Rinkevics-Latvia-contributes-to-the-EU-Central-Asia-dialogue>

¹⁴⁹ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union“. 2013.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁵¹ Vandecasteele, Bruno. 2014: 38.

¹⁵² Kesa, Katerina. 2011. „Latvian and Lithuanian Policy in the Eastern Neighborhood: Between Solitarity and Self Promotion“. *Perspectives* 19: 82.

Another similarity is the usage of the “crossroads between East and West” metaphor. Almost immediately after joining the EU in 2004, acting President of Lithuania Arturas Paulauskas declared that Lithuania would become the “regional leader” in the newly formed ENP: “Our geographical location and experience of living at a crossroads of regions and civilizations opens up more probably the first opportunity in history to bridge the East and West and make Lithuania a center of gravity in a geographically and culturally diverse region¹⁵³”. The prioritization of the EaP then comes as no surprise when Lithuania has emphasized its commitment to the region from the very early stages of the ENP. Vilpišauskas *et al* (2013) argue that EaP is one of the areas “where Lithuania is an EU policy-maker rather than policy-taker” and where the “country can share its experience with the region in “de-Sovietisation” and Europeanization¹⁵⁴”. An example of this sentiment was echoed during the Ukrainian National Platforms visit to Vilnius with the main goal of initiating a “platform of experience sharing between the two countries” in the hopes that “Lithuania’s post-Soviet development is able to offer a unique model for social, economic, and political change” in Ukraine¹⁵⁵”.

Poland

The Polish presidency ran from July to December 2011 and had three pivotal priorities: 1) European integration as a source of growth; 2) a secure Europe; 3) and a Europe benefiting from openness¹⁵⁶”. In accordance with theory, Poland, as a “big” member state, often tended to be proactive in many policy areas at the same time whereas Latvia and Lithuania, as small member states, tended to prioritize between different EU policies. Although overshadowed by Eurozone crisis, the economic crisis in Southern Europe and the events in Northern-Africa, the “European context still influenced its course¹⁵⁷”. Poland’s wish to prove that it can lead the EU in times of crisis was echoed by the President of the European Parliament at that time, Jerzy Buzek, when he noted that “Poland is synonymous with positive energy, enthusiasm and faith in the future” and that “it is a great asset at the start of the Polish presidency and an important

¹⁵³ *Ibid*: 86.

¹⁵⁴ Vilpišauskas, Ramūnas., Vandecasteele, Bruno., Vaznonytė, Austė. 2013. „The Lithuanian presidency of the council of the European Union: advancing energy policy and Eastern Partnership goals: conditions for exerting influence“. *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*: 30.

¹⁵⁵ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. 2013. “Sharing Experience – Ukrainian National Platform Visits Vilnius”. <http://eap-csf.eu/en/national-platforms/ukraine/news-ukraine/sharing-experience-ukrainian-national-platforms-visits-vilnius/>

¹⁵⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „The process of preparation of the 6-month programme“. *Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union*: 127.

¹⁵⁷ Maszner, Beata., Janczak, Jaroslaw. 2013. „The Priorities of the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union – the circumstances of their selection and implementation“. *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne* 3: 44.

task for Poland to change the mood in the EU¹⁵⁸”. The goal was to present Poland as an effective leader, rather than just a “good manager¹⁵⁹”. Summarizing the presidency, then Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk observed: “although we were a debuting country, or maybe because we were, our presidency was the presidency of people committed to perform their tasks, European tasks, as well as they could¹⁶⁰”. Similarly to Latvia and Lithuania, the EaP was also very high on the Polish agenda – as one of the instigators of the initiative, Poland’s commitment and a “sense of mission” in the Eastern neighborhood are well known (see Copsey and Pomorska 2010; Szczepanik 2011). In terms of immaterial resources, Polish discourse offers a somewhat different, but still a familiar picture. Lipinski’s (2013) analysis of Polish media discourse during the presidency reveals that rather than listing financial resources, commentators emphasized Poland’s “national uniqueness” and “national history” as assets that “allow the economically weaker Poland to make a valuable offer of a cultural and symbolic rather than financial nature, which is typical compensation strategy of peripheral countries with a different economic capacity from the center¹⁶¹”.

To conclude, both Latvia and Lithuania present their post-Soviet development experience as a resource third countries can use and benefit from. This ties in with the second theoretical premise: states who exhibit expertise in a certain policy area, are more likely to successfully influence the policy development process. Latvia and Lithuania have certainly made their development assistance towards several of the post-Soviet states one of their main foreign policy priorities and as Kesa (2011) concludes, coupled with EU membership, it “certainly gives these states the possibility to play a bigger role within the international community, and with it, they can ambitiously attempt to obtain the prestigious role of a “bridge” or link between Europe and its Eastern neighborhood¹⁶²”. Poland also listed its “national uniqueness” as a strength, but compared to the other two, Poland’s Presidency differed in its overall scope and magnitude.

¹⁵⁸ Buzek, Jerzy. 2011. „Speech at the Polish Parliament on a day of the beginning the Polish EU Council presidency”.

¹⁵⁹ Lada, Agnieszka. 2011. “The Polish Presidency – pushing the agenda and shaping the Lisbon system”. *European Policy Center Policy Brief*: 2.

¹⁶⁰ Tusk, Donald. 2011. “Speech in the European Parliament to summarize Polish presidency”.

¹⁶¹ Lipinski, Artur. 2013: 216.

¹⁶² Kesa, Katerina. 2011: 96.

3.3 The use of the Council Presidency as a tool to exert influence

Established with the Rome Treaty in 1957, the six month rotating Council Presidency has two official tasks: first, it plans and chairs Council meetings and its preparatory meetings; second, it represents the Council in relations with the other EU institutions¹⁶³. In the previous chapter, I argued that small member states can mitigate their “smallness” by effectively using the opportunities and benefits of the rotating Council Presidency by harnessing the normative power granted by the presidency, relying on soft rather than coercive bargaining strategies, and acting as small “smart states”. Indeed, as Grøn and Wivel (2011) argue, in order for small member states to take full advantage from the Presidency, they must act as “smart states”: first, they must focus their limited resources and concentrate only on issues of high importance; second, small member states must look after the interests of the EU as a whole and not only focus on their narrow national interests¹⁶⁴. This subchapter examines this assumption in light of the Council Presidencies of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

Some scholars argue that the rotating Council Presidency has been made politically irrelevant by the Treaty of Lisbon and that the presidencies only have a “marginal influence” on both internal and external EU affairs (see Kaczynski 2011; Renshaw and Wallace 2006; Vida 2010). For example, Kaczynski (2011) argues that before Lisbon, the state holding the presidency controlled much of the activity in the Council, but “under the new rules the Council has lost political weight and is now balanced in almost all its activities by the European Parliament” and that the “European Council has largely overtaken the political clout from the Council Presidencies and as it now has its own President, there is no special role left for the rotating Presidency¹⁶⁵”. Lisbon introduced some key changes to the presidency institution, such as granting the foreign policy agenda-setting competencies to the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and transferring other presidency competencies to the European External Action Services (EEAS). While the presidency still continues on with most matters, the High Representative combines the “posts of the Commissioner for External Relations and the role of the High Representative, merging the Commission and Council expertise on the issue of foreign affairs¹⁶⁶”. But some commentators question the notion that the Presidency has been left empty handed. Instead, they argue that under certain circumstances,

¹⁶³ Council of the European Union. “The presidency of the Council of the EU”. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/>

¹⁶⁴ Grøn, Caroline. H., Wivel, Anders. 2011: 525.

¹⁶⁵ Kaczynski, Piotr Maciej. 2011: 9.

¹⁶⁶ Grøn, Caroline. H., Wivel, Anders. 2011: 527.

the member states holding the presidency do exert influence (see Thomson 2008; Vandecasteele *et al* 2013; Šešelgytė 2013). Although it is expected that the Presidency suppress its national interests for the sake of the interests of the EU and that the “presidency’s main task is to achieve decision outcomes on important dossiers and in that process may have to put aside its own interests¹⁶⁷”, most presidencies do favor certain initiatives over others. As already discussed, all three cases, but Latvia and Lithuania especially, focused a high proportion of their limited resources on the EaP and doing so, made a conscious decision about the selection of policy initiatives they will most likely have the most leverage over. Rather than focusing on a small set of prioritized issues like Latvia and Lithuania, the Poland aimed at a more all-in-one presidency, as it expressed itself as an “effective leader” of the EU at times of high uncertainty¹⁶⁸.

But as Grøn and Wivel (2011) argue, small member states who wish to take full advantage from the Presidency, must look after the interests of the EU as a whole. Although it can be argued that Latvia and Lithuania did use the presidency as a platform to further their interests in the Eastern Neighborhood, broader EU interests were (at least on an official level) kept in mind. For example, if we look at some of the discourse surrounding the presidencies, we find that the official program documents (obviously) have no single mention of “national interests” and every goal is presented as being in the interest of the EU. This can be attributed to the “trio system” which ensures that broader EU interests are kept in mind. The system was introduced with the Treaty of Lisbon and “working together closely in groups of three, the trio sets long-term goals and prepares a common agenda determining the topics and major issues that will be addressed by the Council over an 18 month period¹⁶⁹”.

To conclude, despite the Treaty of Lisbon changing the rules of the game by transferring key powers to other EU institutions, the Presidency remains an excellent opportunity to promote national interests. Member states acting as small “smart states” have in theory a greater chance to influence initiatives and further their interests. Both Latvia and Lithuania maintained focus on the EaP, but at the same time also kept broader EU interests in mind. The next subchapter examines the extent these two small member states influenced the initiative and makes a comparison with the Polish presidency in order to assess the validity of the claims made above.

¹⁶⁷ Thomson, Robert. 2008. „The Council Presidency in the European Union: Responsibility with Power“. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46: 594-595.

¹⁶⁸ Lada, Agnieszka. 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Council of the European Union. “The presidency of the Council of the EU”. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/>

3.4 Council Presidency of Poland

Turning now to the actual extent of influence exerted by the three presidencies, I will assess each presidency separately by dividing them into bilateral and multilateral tracks. Each case will then produce a final “scorecard” at the end of each subchapter.

Bilateral track

The purpose of the bilateral track is to deepen the individual relationships between the six partner countries and the EU. The partner countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The track “supports political and socio-economic reforms in partner countries in order to: 1) foster political association and further economic integration with the EU; 2) enhance sector cooperation; 3) support mobility of citizens and visa-free travel as long-term goal¹⁷⁰”.

Armenia

One of the main goals of the Polish Presidency was to further the mobility between the EaP partner countries and the EU with liberalizing the visa policy as one of the key elements. The final official report concludes that the Polish Presidency “managed to conduct efficient actions at supporting the process of liberalizing the visa regime with non-Member States¹⁷¹”. The Council adopted a negotiation mandate on the visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia¹⁷², but the agreement itself was signed in 2012. What was signed, though, was the Mobility Agreement with the purpose of better managing the “legal and labor migration, including circular and temporary migration¹⁷³”. Coupled with the fact that the negotiations for an association agreement with Armenia did not move forward, goal achievement (GA) for bilateral relations with Armenia was limited. Poland was heavily involved in getting the negotiations started on the visa facilitation and readmission agreement, as the preliminary agendas were drawn up by the presidency¹⁷⁴. Although a political commitment to a solution

¹⁷⁰ The European Commission. “Eastern Partnership”.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/eastern-partnership/index_en.htm

¹⁷¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union: 158.

¹⁷² *Ibid*

¹⁷³ Council of the European Union. 2011. “Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership between the European Union and Armenia”. 14963/11.

¹⁷⁴ Council of the European Union. 2011. „Provisional agendas for Council meetings during the second semester of 2011 (Polish Presidency)“. 12324/11.

was already taken at the Prague EaP Summit in May 2009, the Commission finally proposed to open the negotiations in September 2011¹⁷⁵ (AFO is therefore moderate).

Azerbaijan

The extent of the progress made with Azerbaijan is similar to Armenia. The EU began negotiation the Association Agreement with Azerbaijan on 2010 but “progress has been stalled, not least since negotiations on the establishment of a DCFTA are not possible as Azerbaijan is not a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO)¹⁷⁶”. The Council adopted the negotiation mandate on agreements with Azerbaijan on visa facilitation and readmission (which was signed in 2014) on 19 December with Polish influence on the agenda and outcome the same as with Armenia¹⁷⁷.

Belarus

Because of the undemocratic nature of Belarus, bilateral relationship between the two have been difficult and unfruitful. The ratification of an EU-Belarus Partnership and Cooperation Agreement has been stalled since 1997 “in response to the political situation in the country: the violation of electoral standards in Belarus’ presidential elections (especially in 2010) and the ensuing crackdown on civil society, political opposition and independent media¹⁷⁸”. Although it is a member of the EaP, Belarus only participates in the framework of the multilateral track. Therefore the level of influence is “none”. Thanks to the “intensive efforts of Poland” to continue the “conditional quality of policy towards Belarus”, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk arranged a meeting between the then President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy and the Belarus opposition¹⁷⁹. Although the meeting does not contribute towards the overall goal oriented achievements, it can be considered an instance of Polish normative influence and soft bargaining skills.

¹⁷⁵ European Commission press release. 2011. „The Commission proposes to open negotiations on Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements with Armenia“. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1053_en.htm

¹⁷⁶ Gromadzki, Grzegorz. 2015: 16.

¹⁷⁷ Council of the European Union. 2011. „Provisional agendas for Council meetings during the second semester of 2011 (Polish Presidency)“. 12324/11.

¹⁷⁸ European Union External Action. “EU Relations with Belarus“. http://eeas.europa.eu/belarus/index_en.htm

¹⁷⁹ European Council press release. 2011. “Remarks by President Van Rompuy following the meeting with Belarus opposition“. www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/.../en/ec/124825.pdf

Georgia

The main goal for the presidency concerning Georgia was to facilitate the initiation of analogous DCFTA negotiations¹⁸⁰ which the Commission authorized in December 2011¹⁸¹. The negotiations themselves started a year later and were launched in Tbilisi by EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht and Georgian Prime Minister Gilauri¹⁸². In this sense, the presidency met its goal and the negotiations went forward, but the DCFTA was already on the agenda together with the Association Agreement. The negotiations on the AA started in July 2010 and the DCFTA is already “included in this agreement”¹⁸³. The final outcome can’t be attributed to the presidency alone because “on many occasions (for example, starting the free trade talks with Georgia), German support was important¹⁸⁴. Therefore AS is “none” and AFO is limited, while GA is high because the presidency reached its main goal of facilitating the initiation of the negotiations.

Moldova

Negotiating the Association Agreements with Ukraine and Moldova “remained among the top objectives” for the Polish Presidency¹⁸⁵, but the AA, including the DCFTA was finally signed “in the margins of the EU summit held on 27 June 2014¹⁸⁶. The expectations were high but the presidency only managed to inaugurate the negotiations (which, granted, was one of its goals)¹⁸⁷. Goal achievement is therefore limited. The talks on the Association Agreement already started on January 2010 with the “agreement also envisaging the creation of a free trade area to improve the access of Moldovan goods on the EU market¹⁸⁸”. AS is therefore “none”. The final outcome (launching the trade negotiations) can be ascribed both to the presidency and to the Commission as the “Council authorized the Commission to start the Association

¹⁸⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union: 143.

¹⁸¹ European Commission. 2011. “Consultation on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas: EU-Georgia / EU-Moldova / EU-Armenia”. http://trade.ec.europa.eu/consultations/?consul_id=162

¹⁸² European Commission press release. “EU and Georgia conclude talks on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area”. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-721_en.htm

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Kaczynski, Piotr. M. 2012. „General Performance of the Polish Presidency”. *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*: 124.

¹⁸⁵ Lehtonen, Tliia. “Pro-European Presidency: Poland on the Way to the Club of Heavyweight EU Members”. *FIIA Briefing Paper* 87: 5.

¹⁸⁶ European Union External Action. “EU Relations with Moldova”. <http://eeas.europa.eu/moldova/>

¹⁸⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union”: 135.

¹⁸⁸ Chican, Maria. 2011. „Moldova and the Eastern Partnership: Much Has Been Achieved, More Is Still to Be Done”. *Youth Eastern Partnership* 10: 6.

Agreement negotiations in 2010” and to launch the trade negotiations when Moldova “fulfills a set of key recommendations”¹⁸⁹. It is therefore logical to assess that the Commission was already heavily involved even before the start of the Polish Presidency.

Ukraine

Concerning Ukraine, the expectations were high. Already before the start of the presidency, commentators hoped that Poland will strengthen Ukraine’s integration with the EU with Poland seeking to accelerate the negotiations on the Association Agreement¹⁹⁰. Foreclosing the negotiations on the DCFTA between the EU and Ukraine was one of the key strategic goals of the presidency in trade relations and was met on December¹⁹¹. The Poles also hoped an agreement on the AA, but the subsequent “political and legal action taken by Ukrainian state authorities against the leader of Ukrainian opposition Yulia Tymoshenko troubled the international public opinion¹⁹²” and prolonged the AA negotiations. The AA was finally signed in 2014 (GA is therefore limited). Also, the DCFTA was already on the agenda since May 2008 when “immediately after the accession of Ukraine to the WTO, the European Union and Ukraine launched negotiations on the DCFTA, as integral part of the future AA¹⁹³”. Ascription for the agenda is therefore “none”, as the issue was already on the agenda. Although at first glance the final outcome (finalizing the negotiations on the DCFTA) was proclaimed as a “one of the most important achievements of the Polish Presidency in the Eastern dimension¹⁹⁴”, the credit must be shared with the Commission, as the negotiations for the DCFTA were already ongoing before the presidency.

Multilateral track

The purpose of the multilateral track is to organize regular panel meetings, seminars and training programs for all the partner countries together and consist of four platforms: 1) democracy, good governance and stability; 2) economic integration and convergence with EU

¹⁸⁹ European Commission press release. 2011. „EU launches trade negotiations with Georgia and Moldova“. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1504_en.htm

¹⁹⁰ Niemczycki, Ignacy. 2009. “Role of the Polish Presidency in Promoting Eastern Policy of the European Union”. *Polish Presidency in the EU – 2011*. Eds, Katarzyna Smyk: 111.

¹⁹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union: 143.

¹⁹² *Ibid*: 15.

¹⁹³ Dabrowski, Marek., Taran, Svitlana. 2011. *The Free Trade Agreement Between the EU and Ukraine: Conceptual Background, Economic Context and Potential Impact*. Brussels: Directorate General for External Policies, Policy Department: 8.

¹⁹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union“: 134.

policies; 3) energy security; 4) contacts between people¹⁹⁵. The main activities undertaken in the framework of the multilateral track are listed in the “Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit” which was hosted on 29-30 September in Warsaw. Officially the events taking place under the aegis of the multilateral track are not divided into the four platforms, but for the sake of simplicity, I’ll categorize each event into the four platforms based on the theme of the event. Since the EaP Summit is one of the core events of the presidency, I’ll assess it separately from the four thematic platforms.

Eastern Partnership Summit

The heads of state or government and representatives of the partner countries met with the EU representatives, heads of state and representatives of EU member states in Warsaw to “renew their commitment to the objectives and continued implementation of the Eastern Partnership¹⁹⁶”. Belarus was notably absent from the summit, as one of the main highlights was to be a declaration condemning the widespread violence in Belarus¹⁹⁷. In the end, the document failed to resonate within post-Soviet states, as it was only signed by the presidents and prime ministers of the EU member states¹⁹⁸. The overall success of the summit was the rather comprehensive Joint Declaration signed by all the participants¹⁹⁹, but initially the second summit was supposed to be held during the Hungarian Presidency in the first half of 2011. Since the only clear addition to the declaration suggested by the presidency was a clause “corroborating the intention of a further deepening of integration of partner states with the EU²⁰⁰” and since the summit was already supposed to happen during the Hungarian Presidency, both AS and AFO remain low.

Democracy, good governance and stability

One of the “brainchild” of the presidency was the creation of the European Endowment for Democracy, which was to be an “additional instrument in democracy promotion mainly in the European neighborhood, and it was an attempt to regain attention and funds for the Eastern

¹⁹⁵ Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership. „Eastern Partnership“. <http://eceap.eu/en/eastern-partnership/>

¹⁹⁶ Council of the European Union. 2011. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw, 29-30 September 2011“. 14983/11.

¹⁹⁷ Gulevich, Vladislav. 2011. “Shaky prospects for the Eastern Partnership”. In *Strategic Culture Foundation*. Retrieved 2015: <http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2011/10/07/shaky-prospects-for-the-eastern-partnership.html>

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union“: 141.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*

neighbors²⁰¹”. The initiative was heavily promoted by the then Polish minister of foreign affairs Radosław Sikorski and “managed to find endorsement for his idea from Catherine Ashton and Stefan Füle²⁰²” who mentioned the initiative in the joint communication on the changing nature of the Neighborhood by the High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission²⁰³. The initiative was presented by Poland²⁰⁴ and arguably would not have existed were not for its heavy promotion.

There were other side events, such as the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly and the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF), but the Polish presidency only supported the organization of these events and did not lead in the creation of these institutions. CORLEAP was set up by the EU Committee of the Regions²⁰⁵, EuroNest by EU and partner country parliamentarians and the European Parliament²⁰⁶, and the EaP CSF by the European Commission²⁰⁷. All three indicators are therefore limited.

Economic integration and convergence with EU policies

Small and medium-sized enterprises are a “key for a sustainable economic development and cooperation in this area aims at applying EU best practices²⁰⁸”. On this note, the founding meeting of the Eastern Partnership Business Forum was held on 30 September in Sopot. Although the event took place at the same time as the EaP summit, it was organized by the Polish association of employers “Lewiathan” in cooperation with Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Business Europe and other organizations²⁰⁹. Although it does take credit for

²⁰¹ Wilga, Maciej., Karolewski, Ireneusz. Pawel. 2014. *New Approaches to EU Foreign Policy*. New York: Routledge: 65.

²⁰² *Ibid*

²⁰³ European Commission. 2011. „A new response to a changing Neighborhood“. *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions* COM(2011) 303.

²⁰⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union“: 141.

²⁰⁵ Committee of the Regions. “History”. <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/corleap/Pages/history.aspx>

²⁰⁶ EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly. “History”.

<http://www.euronest.europarl.europa.eu/euronest/cms/cache/offonce/home/pid/20;jsessionid=E6B6C5AAC09F896D53090A3C2EE25CE5>

²⁰⁷ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. “Our History”. <http://eap-csf.eu/en/about-eap-csf/background1/>

²⁰⁸ European Union External Action. “The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms”. http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/platforms/index_en.htm

²⁰⁹ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. 2011. „First Eastern Partnership Business Forum was held in Sopot“. <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/the-eastern-partnership-business-forum-was-held-in-sopot/>

establishing the Forum²¹⁰, the event itself was only partially organized by the presidency. As staging the forum was not explicitly listed as a goal, I refrain from assigning a GA and AS score. AFO is limited as the presidency did secure that the event would be hosted during the summit and attended by high level government officials from the EU and partner countries²¹¹.

Energy security

No events took place under the multilateral track and although Ukraine and Moldova joined the Energy Community Treaty²¹², this was not part of the platform.

Contacts between people

The fourth and final platform focuses in “particular on students, teachers, researchers, young people, artists and cultural professionals²¹³”. Enhancing youth mobility was certainly one of the priorities of the presidency and it largely assumed its objectives, “focusing on questions on related to mobility and to the Eastern dimension of participation of young people²¹⁴”. Several events were planned and executed (EU Youth Conference, Eastern Dimension of Mobility). GA is therefore high, but AS and AFO remain limited because these events were organized in collaboration with the European Commission²¹⁵.

²¹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union“, 135

²¹¹ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. 2011. „First Eastern Partnership Business Forum was held in Sopot“.

²¹² Council of the European Union. 2011. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw, 29-30 September 2011“. 14983/11.

²¹³ European Union External Action. “The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms”.

²¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. 2012. „Report: Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union“: 175.

²¹⁵ Eastern Dimension of Mobility Conference. 2011. “Conference Conclusions”.

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/2011_july_eastern_dimension_mobility_en.pdf

Table 9. Polish Council Presidency influence scorecard.

Bilateral track			Multilateral track		
Armenia	GA	Limited to moderate	EaP Summit	GA	Limited to moderate
	AS	High to considerable		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	Limited to moderate
Azerbaijan	GA	Limited to moderate	Democracy, good governance and stability	GA	Limited to moderate
	AS	High to considerable		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	Limited to moderate
Belarus	GA	None	Economic integration and convergence with EU policies	GA	-
	AS	None		AS	-
	AFO	None		AFO	Limited to moderate
Georgia	GA	High to considerable	Energy security	GA	-
	AS	None		AS	-
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	-
Moldova	GA	Limited to moderate	Contacts between people	GA	High to considerable
	AS	None		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	Limited to moderate
Ukraine	GA	Limited to moderate			
	AS	None			
	AFO	Limited to moderate			

Source: Compiled by author.

3.5 Council Presidency of Lithuania

The Lithuanian Council Presidency ran from July to December 2013 and just like the Polish Presidency, set out to build a “common area of shared democracy, prosperity, stability and increased interactions” between the Eastern neighbors and the EU²¹⁶

Bilateral track

Armenia

Deepening bilateral trade relations with the EaP partners was one of the key goals of the Lithuanian Presidency. This included taking steps “necessary for the immediate establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area with Armenia before the EaP Summit in Vilnius²¹⁷”. The presidency also hoped to make “significant progress in negotiation the AA and concluding the visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia²¹⁸”. But in an announcement that shocked many, Armenia’s president Serzh Sargsyan announced on the 3 September that the country will instead join the Russian led Eurasian Customs Union, effectively breaking off the free trade agreement negotiations that go hand in hand with the AA²¹⁹. After meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Edward Nalbandian, the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius commented: “we respect Armenia’s will, but we must emphasize that the decision to join the Customs Union diminishes Armenia’s ambitions of integration in and cooperation with the EU²²⁰”. Although this was a major blow to the presidency, Armenia and the EU did finish the negotiations on the visa readmission agreement²²¹ (GA is therefore limited), but because the negotiations on the visa facilitation agreement was started by the Commission already in 2011 and the agreement itself was signed on 17 December 2012 under the Cypriot Presidency²²², both AS and AFO are “none”.

²¹⁶ Council of the European Union. 2013. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania“. 17130/13.

²¹⁷ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union“. 2013, 10-17.

²¹⁸ Vilpišauskas, Ramūnas., Vandecasteele, Bruno., Vaznonytė, Austė. 2013: 31.

²¹⁹ Euractive. 2013. “EU loses Armenia to Russia’s Customs Union”. <http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/eu-loses-armenia-russia-customs-news-530224>

²²⁰ The Lithuanian Tribune. 2013. “Lithuanian and Armenian foreign ministers discussed Armenia’s decision to seek Customs Union membership”. <http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/49939/lithuanian-and-armenian-foreign-ministers-discussed-armenias-decision-to-seek-customs-union-membership-201349939/>

²²¹ European Parliament press release. 2013. “Visas: European Parliament gives green light to EU-Armenia visa facilitation agreement”. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20131004IPR21533/Visas-Parliament-gives-green-light-to-EU-Armenia-visa-facilitation-agreement>

²²² Council of the European Union press release. 2012. “EU-Armenia agreement on facilitating the issuing of visas”. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/134402.pdf

Azerbaijan

Just like with Armenia, the presidency expected “tangible” progress to be made in negotiating the AA and the visa facilitation and readmission agreements²²³. Half of this goal was achieved when Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania acting in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union, Stefan Füle, Commissioner with responsibility for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy and Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed the agreement in the margins of the EaP Vilnius summit on facilitating the issuing of visas²²⁴. AS and AFO are “none” because the “political support” for the agreements was already there in the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit held in 2009²²⁵ and the negotiations were conducted by the Commission rather than the presidency²²⁶.

Belarus

Strong political, social and economic ties with Belarus means that Lithuania “clearly declared its willingness to strengthen cooperation” and pursue the “resumption of dialogue” between the EU and Belarus within the Eastern Partnership context²²⁷. Although the presidency did note a “enchanted bilateral sectoral dialogues between the EU and Belarus on issues such as economic and financial cooperation, the environment and education²²⁸”, not much actual progress materialized. The presidency did issue a statement on the recent developments in Belarus, condemning the ongoing violation of human rights and persecution of opposition activists²²⁹.

Georgia

The presidency’s clear goal was to finalize and “confirm the conclusion” of the negotiations over the AA and the DCFTA with Georgia before the EaP Summit in Vilnius²³⁰. This goal was

²²³ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2013: 17.

²²⁴ Council of the European Union press release. 2013. “EU-Azerbaijan agreement on facilitating the issuing of visas”. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/139759.pdf

²²⁵ Official Journal of the European Union. 2013. “Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the facilitation of the issuance of visas”. L128/49.

²²⁶ EU Neighborhood Info Center. 2014. “EU-Azerbaijan visa facilitation enters into force”. <http://enpi-info.eu/eastportal/news/latest/38269/EU-Azerbaijan-visa-facilitation-enters-into-force>

²²⁷ Dudzińska, Kinga., Dyer, Anna. 2013. „Prospects for EU Policy towards Belarus during the Presidency of Lithuania”. In *The Polish Institute of International Affairs Bulletin* 42: 2.

²²⁸ Council of the European Union. 2013. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania”. 17130/13.

²²⁹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 2013. “Statement by the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU on the recent developments in Belarus”. PC.DEL/723/13.

²³⁰ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2013: 17-18.

achieved and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, including the DCFTA, was initialed at the Vilnius Summit (GA is high)²³¹. Although the Commission started negotiating the AA with Georgia in July 2010 and negotiations on the DCFTA started in February 2012²³², the presidency was heavily invested in the final outcome. During the presidency, the Speaker of the Lithuanian Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, met with David Usupashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, to discuss the “substantial work in the course of EU integration” and to declare that Georgia “is on the right path to the European Union”²³³. The signing of the agreements was an important achievement for the presidency²³⁴ and although the influence of other EU institutions cannot be understated, the presidency did moderately affect the outcome because of its heavy involvement.

Moldova

Similarly with Armenia and Georgia, Vilnius expected to confirm the conclusion of negotiations on the AA, the DCFTA²³⁵ and the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP)²³⁶. All three goals were met (GA is high): the AA and DCFTA agreements were initialed and at its final meeting under the Lithuanian Presidency and the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER II) “agreed to grant the citizens of the Republic of Moldova with visa-free travels to the EU”²³⁷. As the negotiations on the AA were already ongoing since 2009²³⁸ and the visa liberalization dialogue opened in June 2010²³⁹ (when the Visa Liberalization Action Plan was established), influence on the agenda is “none”. Influence on the final outcome is moderate, as

²³¹ Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. 2013. “Strategic Eastern Partnership agreements signed in Vilnius”. <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/strategic-eastern-partnership-agreements-signed-in-vilnius->

²³² European Commission press release. 2013. „EU and Georgia conclude talks on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area”. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-721_en.htm

²³³ Lithuanian Parliamentary Mirror. 2013. “Georgia is on the right path to the European Union”. http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=8395&p_d=142283&p_k=2

²³⁴ Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. 2013. “Open Europe”. <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/open-europe>

²³⁵ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2013: 18.

²³⁶ Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. 2013. “Open Europe”.

²³⁷ Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union press release. 2013. “Lithuanian Presidency reaches agreement on visa free travels for the Republic of Moldova”. <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/lithuanian-presidency-reaches-agreement-on-visa-free-travels-for-the-republic-of-moldova>

²³⁸ Official Journal of the European Union. 2014. “Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova”. L 260/1

²³⁹ Council of the European Union press release. 2014. „Visa liberalization for Moldova”. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2014/03/pdf/visa-liberalisation-for-moldova/>

it depended on Moldova's own efforts towards democratic reforms, the European Commission, and the continued support and efforts of the presidency²⁴⁰.

Ukraine

The events in Ukraine unleashed by President Viktor Yanukovych and his decision not to sign the AA and the DCFTA agreement with the EU were by far the most dramatic moments of the Lithuanian Presidency. The presidency had very high hopes before the EaP Summit in Vilnius and signing the association agreement, including the DCFTA, was one of the "key priorities" of the Lithuanian Presidency²⁴¹. Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite even claimed that "stopping the drift of the proposed Eastern Partnership agreement with Ukraine, as well as energy policy, would be the two priorities of her country's EU presidency²⁴²". In the end, despite the presidencies heavy involvement and support, Ukraine did not sign the agreement, unleashing an internal crisis in Ukraine. The EU and Ukraine did initial a "comprehensive air service agreement at the margins of the Eastern Partnership Summit²⁴³", but as this was not stated as a goal from the beginning of the presidency, GA remains "none". AS is also "none", as the AA and DCFTA were already on the agenda before the start of the presidency²⁴⁴.

Multilateral track

Eastern Partnership Summit

Developing, enhancing and strengthening the multilateral track was one of the main goals of the Vilnius EaP Summit²⁴⁵. Vilnius expected to "mark progress in political association and economic integration with Eastern Partnership countries by finalizing association agreements including the establishment of the DCFTA's and set out new strategic guidelines for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership policy²⁴⁶". In the end, the presidency and the partner countries issued a vague joint declaration where they reaffirm the "importance they attach to the Eastern Partnership founded on mutual interests and commitments as well as on shared

²⁴⁰ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum press release. 2013. "Moldova and EU Presidency discuss preparations for the Vilnius Summit". <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/moldova-and-eu-presidency-discuss-preparations-for-the-vilnius-summit/>

²⁴¹ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union". 2013: 17.

²⁴² EUobserver. 2013. "EU and Georgia edge closer to association deal". <https://euobserver.com/enlargement/120935>

²⁴³ European Commission press release. 2013. „Aviation: EU and Ukraine skies to join forces". http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1181_en.htm

²⁴⁴ Dabrowski, Marek., Taran, Svitlana. 2011: 8.

²⁴⁵ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union". 2013: 10.

²⁴⁶ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union". 2013: 10.

ownership, responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability²⁴⁷. GA and AFO are limited, as progress was made with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, but key goals, such as signing the AA with Ukraine, were not achieved. Preparing for the summit, the presidency was in “intensive contact with the Commission, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Stefan Füle, and working agreements had been made with Van Rompuy’s cabinet²⁴⁸”. AS is therefore also limited.

Democracy, good governance and stability

In the framework of the “democracy, good governance and stability” platform, the presidency aimed to strengthen the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and “encouraging dialogue and practical cooperation with the EU’s Eastern Partners in the field of CSDP²⁴⁹”. To achieve this, Vilnius organized a high-level seminar that brought together “policy-makers from EU and Eastern Partnership countries, as well as representatives of the European External Action Service, the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), and experts of non-governmental organizations²⁵⁰”. The 5th Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on October 4-5 was also held under the presidency, but this event is not fully linked with the incumbent presidency. Because the two events ensured that the goal of encouraging “dialogue and cooperation” was met, GA is high. AS is limited because the Civil Forum is a regular event. AFO is limited because the presidency was only involved to a limited extent and other actor also influenced the final outcome.

Economic integration and convergence with EU policies

Just like the Civil Forum, the Eastern Partnership Business Forum and Conference for Local and Regional Authorities (CORLEAP) has become an annual event. Although organizing the event is mentioned in the official program as a goal, the 2th Business Forum was organized by the European Investment Bank in cooperation with the presidency and the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists²⁵¹. The presidency did plan and organized a meeting between the Ministers of Transport of the EU and Eastern Partnership countries held in Luxemburg in October where they endorsed an “indicative map of the Eastern Partnership regional transport

²⁴⁷ Council of the European Union. 2013. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania“. 17130/13.

²⁴⁸ Vilpišauskas, Ramūnas., Vandecasteele, Bruno., Vaznonytė, Austė. 2013: 26-27.

²⁴⁹ „Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union“. 2013: 16.

²⁵⁰ EU Neighborhood Info Center. 2013. “Lithuanian Presidency stresses role for cooperation with Eastern Partners for European security”. http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=33769&lang_id=450

²⁵¹ European Investment Bank. 2013. “2nd Eastern Partnership Business Forum: Business. Without Borders”. <http://www.eib.org/infocentre/events/all/2nd-eastern-partnership-business-forum.htm>

network that indicates connections with the trans-European Transport Network and related list of projects as first concrete steps in improving transport and logistics connections²⁵²”. The presidency’s aim was to “upgrade sectoral dialogue with the EaP countries to a permanent high-level cooperation²⁵³”. The outcome of the event was a joint declaration between “Ministers responsible for Transport of the EU Member States and Partner countries of the Eastern Partnership and representatives of the European Commission²⁵⁴”. Overall, the presidency achieved its goals (GA is high), but was involved in a limited manner in the agenda-setting phase (AS is limited) and in the final outcomes (AFO is also limited).

Energy security

Although (internal EU) energy security was one of the priority areas of the Lithuanian Presidency²⁵⁵, no specific EaP related multilateral events took place. Instead, the Vilnius Summit joint declaration recalled the energy interdependence of the partner countries and common interest to strengthen mutual energy security including within the Eastern Partnership” and confirmed “their intention to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation”²⁵⁶.

Contacts between people

During the Lithuanian Presidency, the priority in the youth sector was “young people who are not in employment, education or training²⁵⁷”. Lithuania planned to organize the first meeting of the Eastern Partnership Youth Forum²⁵⁸, which was held on 9-12 September (GA is high). The conference was clearly an important milestone for Vilnius and included several workshops and meetings prepared by both “international facilitators nominated from the support structure of Structured Dialogue by European youth forum” and “national facilitators selected by the presidency”²⁵⁹. The presidency also “prepared a compilation document, based on pan-European consultations with young people and results of former EU Youth conferences” and was the

²⁵² Council of the European Union. 2013. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania“. 17130/13.

²⁵³ Vilpišauskas, Ramūnas., Vandecasteele, Bruno., Vaznonytė, Austė. 2013: 30-31.

²⁵⁴ European Commission. 2013. “Joint Declaration: Future of Eastern Partnership transport cooperation”.

²⁵⁵ European Energy Forum press release. 2013. “Energy security: one of the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency”. <http://www.europeanenergyforum.eu/info-corner/energy-news/energy-security-one-priorities-lithuanian-presidency>

²⁵⁶ Council of the European Union. 2013. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania“. 17130/13.

²⁵⁷ European Commission. 2013. “EU Youth Conference Vilnius Final Report”.

²⁵⁸ Council of the European Union. 2013. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania“. 17130/13.

²⁵⁹ European Commission. 2013. “EU Youth Conference Vilnius Final Report”.

“main document to refer to during the workshops of the Conference”²⁶⁰ (AFO is therefore moderate). The youth forum was part of the Structured Dialogue process, which “brings together young people and policy makers across the European Union” and was established by the Council of the EU²⁶¹ (AS is moderate).

Table 10. Lithuanian Council Presidency influence scorecard.

Bilateral track			Multilateral track		
Armenia	GA	Limited to moderate	EaP Summit	GA	Limited to moderate
	AS	None		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	None		AFO	Limited to moderate
Azerbaijan	GA	Limited to moderate	Democracy, good governance and stability	GA	High to considerable
	AS	None		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	None		AFO	Limited to moderate
Belarus	GA	None	Economic integration and convergence with EU policies	GA	High to considerable
	AS	-		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	-		AFO	Limited to moderate
Georgia	GA	High to considerable	Energy security	GA	-
	AS	None		AS	-
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	-
Moldova	GA	High to considerable	Contacts between people	GA	High to considerable
	AS	None		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	Limited to moderate
Ukraine	GA	None			
	AS	None			
	AFO	None			

Source: Compiled by author.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*

²⁶¹ Official Journal of the European Union. 2009. “Council resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)”. C 311/1.

3.6 Council Presidency of Latvia

The Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU ran from January – June 2015. After the turbulent Lithuanian Presidency and the conflict it sparked in Ukraine, the Latvian foreign minister Edgars Rinkēvičs “promised a new orientation for the EaP saying it should not provide grounds for further antagonism with Russia” and said that “Latvia would pursue a more individual approach to EaP countries”²⁶².

Bilateral track

Armenia

Armenia’s decision to join the Russian led Eurasian Economic Union during the Lithuanian Presidency effectively meant Armenia’s exclusion from the possibility of signing the AA and the DCFTA with the EU. Instead, Riga sought to find new ways to promote dialogue and cooperation between Armenia and the EU. Before the start of the presidency, Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvič made a working visit to Armenia to meet Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan, National Assembly president Galust Sahakyan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian to introduce the presidency’s plans and to reaffirm that the “preparation of a new cooperation treaty between the EU and Armenia is a priority on the EU-Armenia agenda²⁶³”. The main goal for Riga was to chair the EU-Armenia Cooperation Council that was held on 20 January 2015 in Brussels²⁶⁴ (GA is high, but AS is limited because the Commission was also involved²⁶⁵). Although the Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvičs chaired the Cooperation Council on behalf of High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, no tangible results came out of the Cooperation Council (AFO is “none”) and both sides only promised to “examine which areas of potential bilateral cooperation are compatible with Armenia’s participation in the

²⁶² EurActive. 2015. “Latvia claims its presidency won’t be anti-Russian”. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-priorities-2020/latvia-claims-its-presidency-wont-be-anti-russian-311106>

²⁶³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia press release. 2014. “Edgars Rinkēvičs: Latvia will promote dialogue with Armenia during its Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/news/latest-news/42720-edgars-rinkevics-latvia-will-promote-dialogue-with-armenia-during-its-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union>

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*

²⁶⁵ Council of the European Union press release. 2015. “Cooperation Council EU-Armenia: good progress towards a deepened cooperation”. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/cooperation-council-eu-armenia-good-progress-towards-deepened-cooperation/>

Eurasian Economic Union and addressed the possible legal basis for future EU-Armenia contractual relations²⁶⁶”.

Azerbaijan

Although Azerbaijan is not a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, the presidency did not set any concrete goals or achieve any tangible bilateral results with Azerbaijan even though cooperation with Azerbaijan was (at least according to Azerbaijan) “among high priorities define during Latvian presidency”²⁶⁷. According to the Riga Joint Declaration, the “participants welcome the progress made in defining a stronger basis for an upgraded contractual framework for EU-Azerbaijan bilateral relations in all areas of mutual interest²⁶⁸”. As there were no tangible results, no scores are assigned.

Belarus

The presidency did manage to make progress in the bilateral relations with Belarus in the area of migration and mobility. In June, the Justice and Home Affairs Council confirmed the “agreement on the Joint Declaration establishing a Mobility Partnership between Belarus and the European Union²⁶⁹”. During the presidency, an “agreement was also reached about the Readmission Agreement” and “progress was made in the negotiations on the Visa Facilitation Agreement”²⁷⁰. GA can therefore be scored as “high”. It’s clear that the presidency aimed to do more with Belarus than the other presidencies, as already in the beginning of January, Latvia's Foreign Ministry State Secretary Andrejs Pildegovics visited Minks to meet with Belarus’ Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei and discussed the “prospects of bilateral political dialogue” between the EU and Belarus²⁷¹. Thanks to Riga’s proactive position and key role in facilitating contacts between Minks and the EU²⁷², the presidency’s contribution in the final outcome in

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*

²⁶⁷ Trend News Agency. 2015. “Co-op with Azerbaijan priority for Latvia’s EU Council presidency, FM says”.: <http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2355432.html>

²⁶⁸ Council of the European Union. 2015. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, Latvia“.

²⁶⁹ Council of the European Union press release. 2015. “Outcome of the 3396th Council meeting”. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/jha/2015/06/outcome-of-the-council-meeting_en_pdf

²⁷⁰ „Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2015: 62.

²⁷¹ Belarus Telegraph Agency. 2015. “Popkovs: Latvia’s EU presidency will help improve Belarus-EU relations”. <http://eng.belta.by/politics/view/popkovs-latvias-eu-presidency-will-help-improve-belarus-eu-relations-9760-2015>

²⁷² The Wall Street Journal. 2015. “EU has Window of Opportunity to improve Belarus Relations, Says Latvian Minister”. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-has-window-of-opportunity-to-improve-belarus-relations-says-latvian-minister-1425742335>

the mobility and visa negotiations can be moderately ascribed to the presidency. AS is still “none”, as Belarus is not mentioned in any of the provisional Council meetings agendas²⁷³.

Georgia

The presidency aimed to “proceed with the implementation of the DCFTA” with Georgia²⁷⁴ (the AA with Georgia was signed in 2014). In the end the “participants of the Riga Summit reviewed and welcomed the signing and provisional application of the AA with Georgia” and stressed that the “implementation of AA/DCFTAs will be a top priority of the EU and the partners for the coming years”²⁷⁵. In addition to the AA/DCFTA, the Summit gave a “clear message that the Visa Liberalization Action Plan will be prepared at the end of 2015” if the “remaining criteria will be fulfilled”²⁷⁶, but Georgia “did not receive what it was hoping for”, as it had been “discussing the non-visa regime for a long time, at the same time successfully implementing several important prerequisites”²⁷⁷ and hoped to secure a visa liberalization agreement with the EU²⁷⁸ (GA is low). Other than commenting on the already achieved results, the presidency did not deliver any tangible results with regards to Georgia (AS and AFO are “none”).

Moldova

Other than the Latvian Foreign Minister chairing the first Association Council between the EU and Moldova on behalf of the EU High Representative, where they “reconfirmed the common will to implement their commitments regarding Moldova’s political association and economic integration with the EU”²⁷⁹, no other bilateral results were achieved with Moldova. By the beginning of the Riga EaP Summit, most “EU Member States had ratified the AA and the DCFTA between the EU and Moldova” and “other Member States were encouraged to ratify

²⁷³ Council of the European Union. 2014. „Provisional agendas for Council meetings, during the first semester of 2015 (Latvian Presidency)“. 17114/14.

²⁷⁴ “The programme of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2015.

²⁷⁵ Council of the European Union. 2015. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, Latvia“.

²⁷⁶ „Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union“. 2015: 59.

²⁷⁷ Latvian Information Agency. 2015. „MEP Mamikins calls Latvian presidency „disaster and shame“.

²⁷⁸ Financial Times. 2015. „Georgia hopes over Europe turn to disappointment“.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8edae8fe-fadc-11e4-84f3-00144feab7de.html#axzz3v2vFrRwv>

²⁷⁹ Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union press release. 2015. “The first Association Council meeting between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova”. <https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/943-joint-press-release-following-the-first-association-council-meeting-between-the-european-union-and-the-republic-of-moldova>

the agreements as soon as possible”²⁸⁰. Because the presidency did not set or achieve any other goals, no scores are given.

Ukraine

Searching for a common solution for the events unleashed by the 2013 Vilnius EaP Summit continued during the Latvian Presidency by “approving a package of measures for the implementation of the Minks Agreements under the Normandy format²⁸¹”. The Foreign Affairs Council met in an extraordinary meeting on 29 January to hold an “in-depth discussion on the latest escalation of violence in Ukraine” and agreed to “extend the restrictive measures targeting persons and entities for threatening or undermining Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity”²⁸², but the presidency did not have much say in the agenda or the final outcomes of the meeting. Instead, the most tangible result was a the comprehensive Joint Declaration issues at the Riga EaP Summit where all participants called for de-escalating and finding a political solution “based on respect for Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity²⁸³” (AS is limited). In addition to this and following the signing of the AA with Ukraine in 2014, the presidency aimed to proceed with the “implementation of the DCFTA with Ukraine²⁸⁴” and welcomed the “provisional application of the DCFTA starting on 1 January 2016²⁸⁵” (GA is high). AFO is moderate, as the presidency did manage to play a contact facilitating role between the EU and Ukraine²⁸⁶.

Multilateral track

Eastern Partnership Summit

The Riga EaP Summit was held on 21-22 May and was largely a modest event, with no real breakthroughs. It reconfirmed the EU’s “commitment to the Eastern Partnership” and “charting a positive agenda for the future”²⁸⁷. The overall aim was to “promote political and economic

²⁸⁰ Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2015: 59.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*: 63.

²⁸² Council of the European Union press release. 2015. „Outcome of the 3369th Council meeting“. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2015/01/st05755_en15_pdf/

²⁸³ Council of the European Union. 2015. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, Latvia“.

²⁸⁴ “The programme of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2015.

²⁸⁵ Council of the European Union. 2015. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, Latvia“.

²⁸⁶ The Wall Street Journal. 2015. “EU has Window of Opportunity to improve Belarus Relations, Says Latvian Minister”. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-has-window-of-opportunity-to-improve-belarus-relations-says-latvian-minister-1425742335>

²⁸⁷ Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union press release. 2015. “Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica: Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga should chart positive agenda for the future”.

contacts, further expansion of a visa-free travel areas to Moldova and Belarus, and increased involvement of civil society²⁸⁸. One of the biggest disappointments was the presidency's failure to secure a visa liberalization agreement with Georgia (GA is therefore limited). Instead, the Summit "reaffirmed that the EaP is a strategic and ambitious EU policy that continues to develop", and "outlined a clear vision of this policy's future up until the next Summit in 2017" with the declaration "reflecting the EU's vision on further development of the cooperation among the partner countries"²⁸⁹. The visa free regime for Moldovan citizens has been in place since 2014, but the negotiations with Belarus on mobility related issues did move forward during the Summit²⁹⁰. AS and AFO are both limited, as the presidency managed to get all the participants to sign a rather comprehensive Joint Declaration, which included a call to de-escalate the conflict in Ukraine²⁹¹. Other than that, the various agreements mentioned in the Joint Declaration were mostly negotiation before the Summit (or before the presidency).

Democracy, good governance and stability

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was held in Riga on 20-21 May and "provided a platform for representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations and think-tanks to debate Eastern Partnership issues²⁹²". The event was organized by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, the Centre for East European Policy Studies and the Latvian Transatlantic Organization. The fifth annual meeting of the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) was also organized by the EU Committee of the Region and "discussed the current state of affairs and challenges in EU's Eastern Neighborhood²⁹³". The presidency also organized an expert meeting of the EaP Panel on Public Administration Reform with a theme of "boosting the administrative capacity of regional and local governments in the EaP countries²⁹⁴" (GA is high). AS is low because the first two events are organized annually. For the expert meeting, the presidency did manage to secure a list of

<https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1805-zanda-kalnina-lukasevica-the-eastern-partnership-summit-in-riga-should-chart-a-positive-agenda-for-the-future>

²⁸⁸ European Parliament briefing. 2014. "Priority dossiers under the Latvian presidency".

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Briefing-Latvian-Presidency_PE%20539.071-rev.pdf

²⁸⁹ Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union". 2015: 59.

²⁹⁰ Council of the European Union. 2015. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, Latvia“.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*

²⁹² „Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union“. 2015: 61

²⁹³ Committee of the Regions press release. 2015. „Eastern Partnership: local and regional representatives call for stronger local and citizen's participation ahead of Riga Summit“.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/corleap-meeting-23-april.aspx>

²⁹⁴ Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union press release. 2015. „Expert meeting of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Public Administration Reform“. <https://eu2015.lv/events/political-meetings/expert-meeting-of-the-eastern-partnership-panel-on-public-administration-reform-2015-06-19>

high level speakers from Latvia, other member states and partner countries (AFO is moderate)²⁹⁵.

Economic integration and convergence with EU policies

The 3rd Eastern Partnership Business Forum entitled “Cooperation across Borders: Eastern Partnership and Beyond” took place “with the support of the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia²⁹⁶. The presidency also organized several events in cooperation with the Commission. In the framework of the Digital Europe priority, the presidency organized the first Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy²⁹⁷. The Commission “signed a €13 million contract to expand connectivity in the EaP countries²⁹⁸” and launched the EaPConnect project, which aims to connect the EU and partner country academic and research communities. The EaP Ministerial Meeting on Trade was held on 7 May with the aim of discussing the “progress in trade and the opportunities and challenges to further development of a successful trade dimension²⁹⁹”. In the field of transportation, the presidency organized the Eastern Partnership Integrated Border Management expert meeting with a focus on “irregular migration, border security, customs matters, transit procedures and the Eastern partners transport networks³⁰⁰”. Although the achieved goals reflected its priorities, the presidency organized most of these events in cooperation with the Commission (AS and AFO are moderate).

Energy security

Other than the EU and partner countries jointly promising to promote an „open policy on energy security, transportation and supply“ and welcoming the „progress in the negotiations for Georgia’s accession to the Energy Community“³⁰¹, the presidency did not achieve much in the framework of the multilateral EaP energy security platform. Most of the projects and agreements discussed in the Riga Joint Declaration were already ongoing before the start of the Latvian Presidency. Therefore no scores are given.

²⁹⁵ Expert meeting of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Public Administration Reform final agenda. 2015. https://eu2015.lv/images/Kalendars/Citi/LPS_Agenda_FINAL.pdf

²⁹⁶ „Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2015: 61

²⁹⁷ European Commission press release. 2015. „First Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy”. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/first-eastern-partnership-ministerial-meeting-digital-economy>

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹⁹ „Results of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union”. 2015: 61

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*

³⁰¹ Council of the European Union. 2015. „Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, Latvia”.

Contacts between people

In cooperation with the Commission, the presidency planned and organized the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum, held on 11-12 February. The Forum focused on „youth employment and cross-sectoral cooperation in the area of youth³⁰²“. The presidency also welcomed Moldova and Ukraine to the Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. Moldova secured full access already in 2014³⁰³ and Ukraine chose to „participate following the beginning of provisional application of the EU-Ukraine AA³⁰⁴. Goal achievement is high, but the presidency was not involved in the agenda-setting process³⁰⁵ and the influence it exerted on the final outcomes is questionable (AS and AFO are both „none“).

³⁰² *Ibid*

³⁰³ European Commission press release. 2014. „Western Balkan countries, Moldova sign up to Horizon 2020“. Retrieved 2015: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-746_en.htm

³⁰⁴ European Commission press release. 2015. „Ukraine joins Horizon 2020 to work with EU in science and research“. Retrieved 2015: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4640_en.htm

³⁰⁵ Council of the European Union. 2014. „Provisional agendas for Council meetings, during the first semester of 2015 (Latvian Presidency)“. 17114/14.

Table 11. Latvian Council Presidency influence scorecard.

Bilateral track			Multilateral track		
Armenia	GA	High to considerable	EaP Summit	GA	Limited to moderate
	AS	Limited to moderate		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	None		AFO	Limited to moderate
Azerbaijan	GA	-	Democracy, good governance and stability	GA	High to considerable
	AS	-		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	-		AFO	Limited to moderate
Belarus	GA	High	Economic integration and convergence with EU policies	GA	High to considerable
	AS	None		AS	Limited to moderate
	AFO	Limited to moderate		AFO	Limited to moderate
Georgia	GA	Limited to moderate	Energy security	GA	-
	AS	None		AS	-
	AFO	None		AFO	-
Moldova	GA	-	Contacts between people	GA	High to considerable
	AS	-		AS	None
	AFO	-		AFO	None
Ukraine	GA	High to considerable			
	AS	Limited to moderate			
	AFO	Limited to moderate			

Source: Compiled by author.

3.7 Results, comparison and analytical conclusions

The aim of this subchapter is to compare the three Council Presidencies in light of the results and to determine which hypothesis turned out to be more accurate. Table 12 below presents a side by side color coded summary of all three presidency's final scores on both the bilateral and multilateral tracks.

The overall goal achievement was quite high for all three cases. The Polish and Lithuanian Presidencies both failed to make progress with Belarus, while Latvia reached its goals. Lithuania also failed to make progress with Ukraine, but this is understandable since the non-signing of the AA was not entirely the fault of the presidency. Latvia also failed to make progress with Azerbaijan and Moldova, but this can be attributed to the waning interest of Azerbaijan in the EaP and Moldova successfully signing the AA/DCFTA with the EU. Overall, the three presidencies exerted similar amount of influence on the multilateral track, with all three failing to deliver any results in the energy security platform. On the bilateral track, Poland did exert more influence on the agenda, especially compared to Lithuania (no influence at all). Poland also managed to exert limited influence on the final outcomes in all cases except Belarus, while both Lithuania managed to exert influence on two cases (Georgia and Moldova) and Latvia moderately influenced the relations with Armenia and Ukraine. The overall picture shows that the Polish Presidency did manage to exert more influence on the bilateral track than the two small presidencies. This outcomes does seem to echo with Jean-Claude Juncker and his statement that “the big are more big on big things, and small on small things”³⁰⁶. The multilateral track is obviously more easily influenced than the bilateral track, which entails signing agreements that have in some cases been in “negotiation limbo” for years.

Its’s also obvious that Lithuania and Latvia exerted more influence on the multilateral than on the bilateral track, meaning that the hypothesis 1B is true: small states have more influence on multilateral relationships than on bilateral. Multilateral track might be easier to influence, as it does not require partners to sign any agreements, such as the AA or DCFTAs. The second set of hypothesis inquired whether small states have more influence on the agenda (AS) or on the final outcomes (AFO). In the bilateral track, the Lithuanian Presidency only managed to influence the final outcomes in two cases – Georgia and Moldova. The Latvian Presidency managed to exert equal amounts of influence on both the agenda and on the final outcomes.

³⁰⁶ European Commission press conference. 2014. “The Juncker Commission: The Right Team to Deliver Change”. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-585_en.htm

Table 12. Comparing the influence of Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian Presidencies of the Council of the EU on the Eastern Partnership initiative.

	Polish Presidency			Lithuanian Presidency			Latvian Presidency		
Bilateral track	GA	AS	AFO	GA	AS	AFO	GA	AS	AFO
Armenia	Limited	High	Limited	Limited	None	None	High	Limited	None
Azerbaijan	Limited	High	Limited	Limited	None	None	-	-	-
Belarus	None	None	None	None	-	-	High	None	Limited
Georgia	High	None	Limited	High	None	Limited	Limited	None	None
Moldova	Limited	None	Limited	High	None	Limited	-	-	-
Ukraine	Limited	None	Limited	None	None	None	High	Limited	Limited
Multilateral track									
EaP Summit	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Democracy and stability	Limited	Limited	Limited	High	Limited	Limited	High	Limited	Limited
Economy and EU policies	-	-	Limited	High	Limited	Limited	High	Limited	Limited
Energy security	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contact between people	High	Limited	Limited	High	Limited	Limited	High	None	None

Source: Compiled by author.

Together the two small states managed to exert limited amount of influence on the agenda two times (Latvia on Armenia and Ukraine) and four times on the final outcomes. Both presidencies exerted equal amount of influence on the multilateral track on both the agenda and on the final outcomes. Though the difference between the two cases is quite narrow, hypothesis 2B is true in this case. This is bolstered by the results from the Polish Presidency, which also exerted more influence on the final outcomes than on the agenda. The reason is that the agendas in the bilateral track were already set in stone before the start of each presidency and therefore hard for each individual presidency to influence.

The third set of hypothesis is the trickiest: whether the overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is lower or when it's higher. It seems that the Commission (and other actors) still have a lot to say on what ends up in the agenda and what the final outcome really is, as GA in the bilateral track is usually high (1 case) or limited (3 cases) even when AFO is "none". When GA is limited, the final outcome tends to be also "none" and when GA is high (3 cases), AFO is limited (4 cases). This tells us that the presidencies do have some influence, but without the support of other actors, the likelihood of failing to deliver results would be higher. This confirms hypothesis 3B: the overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is higher.

CONCLUSION

Small states as research subjects have been dividing the scholarly community since the establishment of International Relations as a research field. The field has largely been divided on the subject of small state influence – some scholars, notably realists, claim that small states have only a marginal role to play in international affairs, while others argue the opposite. The aim of this thesis was to challenge the assumption that the influence of small member states on the EU's foreign policy is negligible. I intended to answer four questions: first, can small EU member states influence EU foreign policy? Second, how can we explain their potential influence? Third, how can we “measure” influence? And fourth, how much influence have they actually exerted?

The first part of the thesis focused on the behavior of small states. I discussed the difficulty in conceptualizing “small states” using different variables and methods. I then proceeded to define small member states using the number of members of parliament (MP's) in the European Parliament (EP). The next part of the chapter focused on the small state literature in both IR in general and in the subfield of EU studies, tracking the historical events, the dominant IR theories that influenced the field, and the main small state topics that were popular in each historical period. The final part of the chapter presented three factors that, in accord with this thesis, adequately explain the influence of small member states in EU foreign policy: first is commitment to an issue and the general salience of a policy issue; second, a forerunner reputation, expertise in a policy issue and/or possession of content and procedural knowledge; and third, using the rotating Council Presidency of the EU to one's own advantage.

The second part of the thesis presented the research method used to measure small state influence. I discussed the small-N research design, the selection of cases and data and presented three sets of competing hypothesis to be tested. The first set of hypothesis questioned whether small states have more influence on the bilateral or on the multilateral Eastern Partnership track, the second set of hypothesis asked whether small member states have more influence on the agenda or on the final outcomes, and the third set whether the overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is lower or higher. In the last part of the chapter I operationalized “influence” and presented the “influence measuring” framework to be used in the thesis. I used a modified version of Vandecasteele's *et al* (2014) framework and argued that three indicators should be used in order to comfortably assess the scale of small member state influence on the EU's foreign policy: goal achievement, the ascription of agenda setting, and

the ascription of final outcomes. Each indicators was measured on a three level scale: none, limited to moderate influence, considerable to high influence.

The third and most important chapter analyzed and compared the Council Presidencies of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland using the theoretical and methodological framework discussed in the two previous chapters. First I gave a brief overview of the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership initiative. I then continued on to discuss the commitment to the EaP initiative and the immaterial resources of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. I argued that all three cases were heavily involved and committed to developing the Eastern Partnership initiative with Latvia and Lithuania prioritizing the EaP and Poland going more for an “all-in-one” type of Council Presidency. Also, both Latvia and Lithuania presented their post-Soviet development experience as a resource third countries can use and benefit from. The next part of the chapter argued that member states acting as small “smart states” have in theory a greater chance to influence initiatives and further their interests. Both Latvia and Lithuania maintained focus on the EaP and aimed to use their Council Presidency’s to the fullest, but at the same time also kept broader EU interests in mind.

The final part of the chapter assessed the extent of influence exerted on both the bilateral and the multilateral track of the EaP. Each case then produced a final “scorecard”. This exercise revealed three conclusions: first, that hypothesis 1B was true and small states have more influence on multilateral relationships than on bilateral; second, that hypothesis 2B is true and small member states have more influence on the final outcomes than on the agenda; and third, it confirmed that hypothesis 3B is true and the overall goal achievement level is higher when the level of ascription is higher. Based on the results this thesis has produced, we can conclude that small member states are able to exert a limited amount of influence on the EU’s foreign policy when they use their strengths and resources to leverage their positions vis-à-vis bigger and more powerful member states, but without the support of other actors, the probability of failing to deliver results would be higher.

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LÜHIKOKKUVÕTE

Lõputöö eesmärk on analüüsida väikeste liikmesriikide mõju Euroopa Liidu ühises välispoliitikas. Selleks uurin kahe väikeriigi, Läti ja Leedu, suutlikust ELi Nõukogu eesistujariigi perioodil mõjutada ühte liidu suurimat välispoliitilist initsiatiivi – Idapartnerlust. Selleks, et teha nüansirikkamaid järeldusi, võrdlen Läti ja Leedu juhtumit Poola eesistujariigi perioodiga. Antud tees lisab olemasolevale väikeriikide kirjandusele kolmel viisil: esiteks, annab see põhjaliku ülevaate klassikalisest ja kaasaegsest väikeriikide kirjandusest ning hindab kriitiliselt realismist tulenevat tõlgendust väikeriikide käitumisest rahvusvahelises süsteemis; teiseks annab töö ülevaate erinevatest metodoloogiatest ja sünteesib uue „mõju“ mõõtmise raamistiku; ja kolmandaks, mõõdab antud raamistiku abil kolme juhtumi mõju Idapartnerluse initsiatiivile.

Töös väida, et kõige adekvaatsemalt seletavad väikeste liikmesriikide mõju EL välispoliitikas kolm tegurit: esiteks pühendumus poliitikavaldkonnale – prioritseeritud teema peab olema neile üldise tähtsusega; teiseks on väikeriikidel suurem tõenäosus poliitikavaldkonda mõjutada, kui nad omavad teatud mittemateriaalseid ressursse (tunnustatud liidrid mingis valdkonnas või omavad antud valdkonnas eksperditeadmisi); ja kolmandaks avaldavad väikeriigid poliitikavaldkonnale suuremat mõju, kui nad suudavad enda kasuks ära kasutada Euroopa Liidu institutsioonilist raamistikku (näiteks EL Nõukogu eesistujariigi rolli). Mõju ulatuse mõõtmiseks kasutan kolme indikaatorit: eesmärgi saavutamise ulatus, mõju ulatuse omistamine päevakorra, ja mõju ulatuse omistamine lõpptulemustele. Juhtumite mõjuulatuste mõõtmisel ja võrdlemisel selgus kolm lõppjäreldust: esiteks on väikestel liikmesriikidel suurem mõju multilateraalsetele Idapartnerluse platvormidele kui bilateraalsetele suhetele; teiseks suudavad väikesed liikmesriigid mõjutada rohkem lõpptulemusi kui esmast päevakorda; ja kolmandaks selgus, et eesmärkide saavutamise tase on kõrgem siis, kui üleüldine omistamise tase on samuti kõrge. Saadud tulemuste põhjal võib järeldada, et väikesed liikmesriigid on võimelised mõjutama piiratud määral Euroopa Liidu ühist välispoliitikat siis, kui nad kasutavad enda tugevusi ja ressursse ära nii, et suudavad enda positsiooni suuremate ja võimsamate liikmesriikidega võrreldes võimendada. Siiski tuleb pidada silmas ka asjaolu, et ilma teiste tegutsejate toetuse ja panuseta on tõenäosus üksi mõju avaldada väiksem kui koostööd tehes.